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CHARACTERS OF DICKENS
POPULAR EDITION, ILLUSTRATED;
ALSO, EDITION DE LUXE

THE MOTHER IN EDUCATION

By

Florence Hull Winterburn

Author of Nursery Ethics, From the Child's Standpoint, The Children's Health, etc.

NEW YORK
McBRIDE, NAST & COMPANY
1914

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Published October, 1914

DEDICATION

To the Rich Mother, with unlimited opportunity to start her children in life well equipped with broad culture;

To the Poor Mother, making up in the keenness of her intelligence, the zeal of her affection, for the deprivation of mere money to carry out her worthy ambitions;

To the Cultured Mother, filled with enthusiasm for her ideals, and able to direct her sons and daughters better than any other teacher;

To the Simple Mother, who doubts her ability to give her children that aid no other can give so well;

To all the Mothers of our beloved America, looked upon with hope and faith by the rest of the world now, as the destined agents for the up-building of the race;

This book is humbly dedicated by the author.

FOREWORD

IS there any joy so pure and complete as that of seeing a young nature unfolding day by day under your influence and training? And when that child is your own, and all the comfort and recompense of his development will belong to you, does not the pleasure of his education, so far as you can contribute to it, become irresistible?

Believing as I do, that an intelligent mother can do wonderful things in the mental education of her child, as well as in that far more important matter, development of his character, I put it forward not only as an urgent duty, but as one of a woman's best privileges, to give of her higher energies to her child's development.

The great lesson of this century is that of a broader humanity. We are best when we give out most, smallest when we live merely for ourselves. The fine privilege of an equal education with men has been given to women. Surely, they can employ it in no

better way than in giving to the world better citizens.

In education the beginning is everything. Happy is that child whose foundation has been well laid at home, before he goes to school where he will be dealt with as one of a crowd! What I state I have proved by practice. I know that school education can be shortened by several years through the efforts of a mother, and that nothing outside can supply the place of an atmosphere of home culture.

Nor is the work complicated or hard. The scheme outlined in this book is so practical and simple that it will surely appeal to all mothers who desire to do their best by their children. To such I dedicate it, with the earnest hope that they may find as much satisfaction in it as I did while working it out in actual practice.

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F. H. W.

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THE MOTHER IN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

IN starting out upon any work we first try to classify our materials, putting together all those things that are related, and setting aside those that are incongruous with our general plan. What builder, wishing to construct a cement house, would have a pile of granite blocks occupying the center space in his lot? Or what housekeeper, intending to make cake, would begin by setting out an array of pots and skillets on her working table? In order to get the best results the artist who has an oil painting in hand concentrates his mind altogether on the process of oil painting, eliminating for the time everything belonging to crayon or water colors, and devoting himself entirely to the work he is setting out to do.

This is the law for the reformer in morals and for the educator also. The very first thing that either of them try to effect is the separation of classes of individuals according to certain well known qualities. Then, when they have their soldiers drawn up in line

they go to work to drill them, and subject them to disciplinary regulations which are made according to the standardizing of their several capacities. For the purpose of show nothing could be better. It is a pretty sight to see a crowd moving in harmony, uniting their voices in a stirring song, wearing almost the same expression of countenance as they are inspired with the same sentiment of patriotism or devotion. They look very much alike and form a perfect community so long as the necessity for acting together keeps them joined. This is all that their disciplinarians either attempt or effect. The instant they are let loose from one another things begin to happen. Nature has a chance to re-act against artificial restraints, and the individual shows what his raw material consists in, separated from that part of him which has been so nicely drilled.

Who has not marked with some interest the sailors taking their shore leave from a man-of-war? They go about the town near which their ship is anchored, not singly, but in groups, leaning up against one another, as dependent as schools of fish, almost as helpless as the fish to resist baits thrown to them by exploiters of their simplicity. If one gets off by himself he

is almost certain to fall into mischief. Then he is punished like a child, and not allowed more leave for some time, in order that he may learn to obey certain rules of conduct that have come to answer for him in the place of self-imposed moral standards. But there are always sailors who are above the average; who incur no punishments, who are trustworthy and beyond the reach of common temptations. They are the sailors who come of good families, who have had some training at home before entering the navy, whose intelligence has been developed in childhood and whom their mothers taught things never learned so well in later life. Or else they belong to that brave, rare squad, the self-educated, who have some fine instinct in them that puts them above the average man, and who, despite all obstacles and stumbling blocks work out their own salvation. But it is at a terrible waste of life and strength. In moral training as in all matters of education the beginning is everything. It takes more time and power to undo a wrong beginning and go straight afterwards than to live two ordinary lives, where the beginning has been normal.

Now, similarly, the schools drill children in squads, rating them according to the most general rules, stand-

ardizing their capacities on the hedonistic principle of the best good for the greater number even though injustice must thereby be done to exceptional pupils. For the learning of facts the system is fair enough, although even there those gifted with the best memories will forge ahead of the rest and then weary for new matter long before the others are ready for it. But superficially looked at the results are very striking. Twenty children, a hundred, a thousand children, all with eager, interested faces, looking and listening, imbibing knowledge according to the easy fashion of present day instruction, and seemingly making rapid progress in science, literature and history. Looked at in the mass there is no appreciable difference in them, or in their ability to receive and digest learning. The most efficient system that educational reformers have been able to devise is now in operation in all our better schools, and nothing that can be done to make learning easy has been neglected. Constant improvements are being made in the classifying system, strenuous efforts attempted in the way of " individualizing " instruction so as to bring out the natural ability of the child. It is heroic, this enthusiasm of teachers to separate from the mass particular

atoms and minister to their personal needs. But they have a work in hand here that must always be increasingly difficult; that is beset by drawbacks that no enthusiasm can overcome, because they are planted on the bed-rock soil of natural differences not possible to be understood by strangers or appreciated by any one who is not intimately acquainted with the character of the child from the very beginning of his life.

Moreover, in justice to all, no exceptions may be made in the regulations that are for the welfare of the mass. If a certain child is to be taken out of the mass on account of one particular quality yet cannot be elevated to the class above on account of not being up to its standard in other essentials, he must remain where he is, with his efficiency standardized according to its lowest manifestation. Not only in the big schools does this difficulty arise but in every school. One of a principal's chief troubles is to classify his pupils especially when his classes are small, and his boast is that he gives "individual" instruction. Always the one rule must be observed because getting away from it is an impossibility: the child must be rated according to his ignorance and not ac-

cording to his knowledge. He will be taught that which he has no use for along with that which he should have because the others need both. He must lose time and energy because his loss is a necessary part of the game that plays fair with the rest.

So he is drilled with his class. Again, it is a fair and sightly instance of modern methods in education, this drama of crowds of young people all having the same general outside appearance of knowledge, all having, as the valedictorians say, "traversed the same paths of learning, and now separating for their individual careers." But now that the mutual dependence of class interests and—to be frank—class aid secretly practised, is over and each tub stands on its own bottom, what will be the fate of the tub? If it is a leaky vessel, a defective individuality, now is the time when all its defects will become painfully apparent. Idiosyncrasies will start into relief, never having been suspected while the crowd concealed them, and deficiencies unprovided for by a system that applied to all will make the individual quake with a sense of ignorance and overwhelm him with a conviction of being at a disadvantage with life. Diogenes in his tub was well enough, but how about a troupe

of Diogeneses, all at odds with the world and determined to be eccentric?

The school trains children well for community needs, for citizenship and the exigencies of war and fires. It opens up to them the world of literature and science by teaching them the letters. It offers them a liberal knowledge of business and the arts by the power to read the newspapers. It sends them forth fortified in soul by acquaintance with heroes of history and by reiterated rules of conduct that apply to all their public relations with one another. All this is within its function, and it performs its duty well.

But there are things that the school cannot teach, that it can never teach though it should burst in the effort, and these things are what make life most worth the living. The best system of school instruction that can be devised can only effect the partial development of a human being. All those qualities that are peculiarly his own, that make him "different" and consequently valuable to himself, are untouched by methods of instruction that have treated him simply as a member of the community. He has been taught to read; it may be a blessing, it may be a curse. That depends upon the bent of his

mind; upon the kind of influences his character has been subjected to for the larger period of his growth and development, which is manifestly that portion of his time that is or ought to be spent at home. If it is spent in the street then so much the worse. But in any event it is a thing apart from the school. The tastes and tendencies that have been encouraged in him either by a wise parent or by his comrades in the street will decide his destiny; not the fact of his knowing who Abraham Lincoln was. Not knowledge but our sympathies inspire us to any sort of action; and sympathy is a matter of infantile habit. The child learns to be hard and cruel or generous and forbearing *from his mother.* Else in the furnace of affliction, else not at all. And out of his sympathies comes his rank in the world. Nothing can gain place for him, nothing limit him but his capacity for sympathy, which is the force that moves his intelligence. It is the duty of the school to shut the door against the very display of personality which is the life and soul of individual development. Even if an odd teacher encourages the expression of unusual ideas the school community in general will hoot it down. Consequently it is a mat-

ter of anxious effort on the part of the unusual child to conceal his eccentricities. He endeavors with all his might to be no better and no worse than the average of his class; no wiser and not more ignorant, to be the essential opposite probably, of what he desires to be, in order to subserve the ends of popularity.

The child should be educated as an individual. If he cannot get the education at school is he to go without it? There are many children who apparently must go without it; the children of parents who are too ignorant or too busy to do their duty. For emigrants, for the very poor and ignorant the school steps in and offers a makeshift at this work. It has tried hard to fulfil the duty of "character building" which implies the development of qualities and talents, of tastes and habits; and in the case of the docile ignoramus, having no offset at home which he can respect so much as he respects his teacher, no code that disagrees, no social influences that re-mold his ideas, it answers. It is better than no effort at all. But are parents who have means and leisure, who have culture not only above the average but capacity that seeks an outlet beyond the routine of daily work,

who yearn for opportunities to benefit the world, are these in the right to leave the individuality of their child to be treated in the rough as the nature of the less fortunate is? This is not equality but brutality. This is losing the advantage of possessing the means of the higher education and putting our child down again on the level from which his family has arisen by its own worth.

Every child should have the best possible start in the race. If he can be entered in class B he should not be sunk to class J or K. An immense quantity of time and power may be saved not only to himself but to the state by his receiving at home all the previous education his parents can give him. If the child of educated parents could be entered in school in the rank above the primary grade that grade could be left for the advantage of those who have not the good fortune to possess educated parents. The child of happier chance would not then have his budding ambition to make rapid progress weakened and stultified by being kept back with a weaker class, and that class would be enabled to proceed at the leisurely rate agreeing with its relatively lower intelligence. It is both a selfish and hedonistic proposition, taking

account of the best welfare of our own child first but giving heed also to the real welfare of the mass outside. The one objection that may be urged against removing the child of cultured parentage from association with those of ignorant parents at the stage of primary training, to the seeming loss of the latter, is met in this way: in infancy the influence of evil —and ignorance is to be so ranked in this connection —is much stronger than the influence for good among those of equal age. The less intelligent child, or child whose intelligence is not developed, will be more prominent through his ignorance than the better instructed child is through his ability. Every solecism committed by the child who comes into social circles above his experience furnishes food for comment and conceit in his more fortunate companions. He would himself rate it a joy to escape this ordeal until he shall have received a little more preparation. And the superior child would also have the advantage of being only among his compeers for that period of his life when his mind is at its most susceptible state for receiving impressions. Conceit would be kept down in him and ambition stimulated. He would feel the need of doing his best in order to keep his place

among those as well prepared as himself. The average standard would be raised by the superiority of individuals.

The school is a world by itself. Does any one doubt that it is better for the individual to enter into this world fortified against evil influences by a character previously strengthened by some mental discipline than to go forth as tender as an unfledged chicken?

One of the objections brought against large schools by careful parents is that of bad associations. The weight and truth of this objection is much greater than is commonly known when it is uttered. But it is done away with when the child mingling with ignorant or vicious children knows enough to resist evil and to afford an example of better conduct. If he has received at home the essential preliminary education he can go through that ordeal unscathed. A strong individuality is powerful against low community influences.

Only in the home can the child properly develop his individuality. Let parents cease to believe that they do their whole duty in sending their child to school. A complete education must combine the

community teaching of the school with the individual teaching of the home. Putting aside the question of physical and moral education, even intellectual education itself depends for its best interests largely upon parents. For mental activity starts from feeling, and all the higher thoughts that come to us as the result of knowledge have their springs deep down in our emotional life. What we learn to admire, what we learn to love in our earlier years, becomes the object of our ambition in maturity; and as will is merely a wish turned into an action, and our ultimate character is the result of willing, it is evident that the most powerful agents of our destiny are those that first stir up in us aspirations and intentions.

Is it not important then, that the parent who possesses the influence to mold character should exert it intelligently? Is it not a mother's duty to give all the time and pains necessary to that individual education of her children that can only be carried on in the home and under her supervision? Household work is becoming every day more scientific and consequently less arduous; women have more and more time for the higher things of life: what is higher

than the training of the young beings given into their charge?

Perfect education is the blending of home care with school discipline, the uniting of individual development with community life. To the school belongs its indispensable part but to the parent belongs a duty that is even more important. If the child could receive but one part of his education I doubt very much if it would not be better for his ultimate welfare that his character should be trained and his intelligence developed by a home education than that he should miss this entirely and only profit by school discipline.

It is a striking proof of the truth of this assumption that the individuals who are leaders in the world in the cause of humanity have had mothers whose characters have been an influence in their lives, while those who stand for everything that makes against the general welfare have been early thrown upon the care of the state for their entire training and have missed the gentler culture of the home.

THE MOTHER IN EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

The Inspiration of Mother Love

"Everywhere throughout this nation the School of Home was the most important detail of the educational system. Woman gave her time to managing it, by love and being loved. Real love it was, born of her minute knowledge of her children and their faith in her. Continual association only could produce such love and faith.

"We have abandoned the home school and almost all its principles. It made men. We educate our children by the thousand and no longer by the one. Our learning, like much of our living, has been syndicated. But the men whom we have given to the world, who put humanity into their debt, were mother-taught in the little School of the Home. Washington, Webster, Lincoln, Greeley, Mark Twain, Edison — all were educated in it. It was the cradle of American preeminence. Mother was a potent word in those days, strange as that may seem to children of the ris-

ing generation. We men know that any country can be made or unmade by its mothers."— IRVING BACHELLER.

HE was sitting on the door-sill, this blue-eyed mite of four, his rosebud mouth slightly open, and his fair little brows slightly puckered, while his unsteady baby fingers essayed to stand a certain troublesome block on top of his tower. For half an hour he had been working, and the moment of triumphant result was at hand. He was too absorbed to hear approaching footsteps, and started in alarm as a quick, impatient man's voice sounded in his ears, "What are you making such a litter in the doorway for? Into the house with you, Teddy. Here, let me pass, I'm in a hurry."

And with a careless, rough sweep of his cane the father cast aside the pile of toys and made his way down town in a perfectly complacent frame of mind and with not the least idea of the ruin his momentary irritation had wrought. But oh, the pity of it! Where the stately tower had stood, wrought with such patience by those small, weak fingers, was only an unsightly pile of blocks. And where in the soul of the baby architect had been elation, hope, pride, at the crisis of an achievement, were grief and disappoint-

ment, and something harder to bear—a dumb, vague resentment against the world which treated him thus contemptuously.

But as he fought with two big tears a gentle arm came about his neck and a soft voice cooed, "What is the matter with my little man? The nice house had a tumble? Mother will straighten things out and then sit here and watch Teddy build it all up again. Cheer up, all builders have some troubles, you know. Be a good sport!"

And in the sunshine of his mother's sympathy and understanding the mite feels it possible to set to work with fresh energy, and contentment and peace returns to his heart. Well for his soul that what the thoughtless father spoils the mother's tender fingers restore. The thing meddled with was not simply a material object, capable of sustaining shocks and recovering, but that fragile, intangible thing which is like the iridescent light playing over a prism. Break the glass and it is gone. Do you not recollect that day in your childhood when after a period of anticipation that seemed like years to you, the palpitating moment approached that was to crown the work that had cost many moments or hours of self-sacrificing effort, and

some ruthless authority, knowing nothing of your hopes and plans, spoiled your little house of mirth? Perhaps only yesterday a meddlesome hand knocked over some one of your hopeful houses of cards. You know well the sting of the disappointment; the feeling that the world has not appreciated you, but has, on the contrary, given you a cruel rebuff. So flees happiness.

Of all the millions of little ones, busy at this hour with their trivial occupations, silly to adult eyes, but covering, if we could see beneath the surface, a mighty ebb and flow of human passions, how many are being hurt and baffled every second by some thoughtless act of their elders! Yet these elders are seldom moved by the deliberate wish to do injury to children. They merely lack sympathy, and consequently, understanding. The evil they do comes from their absorption in what they please to term the practical, important concerns of life. Grown people are mostly in haste to go about their business, and they believe themselves justified in knocking over or scattering whatever lies in their path. Fathers must earn the living, and in their headlong rush after the nimble dollar they do not pause long enough to comprehend the meaning of the

dramas they catch glimpses of from time to time in their homes. The unfolding of the delicate buds of child character is a mystery they do not undertake to fathom. And the habit of indifference begets a certain callousness or cynicism that is the last blow to confidential relations.

I have known a very few men who had the gift of a maternal instinct, so that when the mother of the family passed away they were able to supply the place of a woman in the care of their children. Such men had very curiously, the feminine nature; and they were not successful in the usual pursuits that men undertake. But most men are of the build which takes to the more robust occupations of life and "leaves sentiment to women." At this moment a little scrutiny into conditions reveals that modern women also disdain sentiment in quite a manly fashion and consider all their duty done when they provide for the material well-being of their offspring. In effect, if not in so many words, numerous mothers exclaim daily, "Get away, little soul, while I trim a dress for your little body. I like better to use a needle and busy myself with this pretty fancy work, which allows my mind to be idle, than to strain my wits try-

ing to keep up with the race of your young intellects or weary myself developing your good instincts and checking erring tendencies. Don't make demands upon my attention. *Let me alone!*"

Ah, mothers, mothers, you know not what you do. It were better to deny yourselves the indulgence of pretty, easy work, and accept the great work which is your supreme duty on earth, and the one fraught with the sweetest blessing humanity knows. There is no other duty so exigent to a woman as that of fostering and protecting the happiness of a child. Through the making of the child's happiness she can develop within him the seeds of goodness more effectually than if she labored sternly and assiduously to correct his faults. The world hardens and harshens us, but deep within our hearts there always lives one little oasis where brood some memories of our childhood's happy days. And when the meaner impulses of our nature pull us down these delicate memories swing us back into the right path, and we are the better men and women because once, in the long ago, we were happy children.

No wicked man is wholly wrong if he can look back once in awhile to a sweet, wholesome day in his wayward life. No erring woman is lost whose eyes brim

with tears as there rushes across her vision some scene in her innocent youth when the sun shone on a brightly upturned little face, and dancing baby feet keeping time to the heart-beat of happiness. But there is not much hope for the regeneration of unhappy men and women whose childhood was barren and hard. They might pardon circumstances for the wreck of their lives, but for a miserable childhood they cannot pardon God.

So it does mean something when we carelessly and roughly turn the bright hues of hope in a baby breast into the gloom of mourning. It means something definite and very important to his future when a little one murmurs into a tender ear, "Mother, I've had a happy day!"

There are no little things in life. The airy trifles are the mighty forces which turn the material wheels of our existence. Who knows at what instant we are changing the tenor of a human career! A light word at the wrong time, a blighting sentence when tenderness was needed, mockery when one's little efforts should have been treated with seriousness, gloom when the mother's eye should have beamed with joy—all these mistakes are the spades that dig graves for

those over whom our influence is strong, and for whose welfare we are responsible.

And what wonderful things mothers have done for children whose trust and confidence they have never lost! The artist Flaxman said that it was "his mother's smile at the right moment which made him an artist." Napoleon valued the good opinion of his mother more than that of any other person, and at the height of his glory consulted her when he refused to defer to another mortal. How many great statesmen and brave soldiers can look back to some incident of their childhood when a single word fitly spoken, an appreciative smile when the beginnings of ambition were stirring in infantile breasts, furnished the magnetism that set their ambition afire!

We should not forget that it is emotion that supplies the vital force for all enterprises. Though the head plans the heart directs, and a child that is downhearted, discouraged, at odds with the world, cannot make his mind work as it should. The world would cease to move along, even in a mechanical way, were it not for the push of strong feeling. Ferrier asserts that the springs of most of our later activities are drawn from early recollections of things that were

agreeable to us, or that provoked in us some strong desire. It is one of the peculiar privileges of a mother to guide her child aright through furnishing him with a happy environment; to bathe him from infancy in the glow of sympathy, to encourage him continually by her understanding of his immature but perhaps permanent ambitions, and never to ridicule his ideas, however absurd they may seem. The first stirring of a real desire may be an hereditary impulse toward a pursuit for which the child has a veritable talent. On the other hand, anything that is absolutely nonsensical will soon be out-grown; the child voluntarily abandons what has no foundation in common experience.

A little girl of ten years, whose forebears had been in several instances remarkable linguists, was seized with a strange ambition to invent a new tongue. After some secret attempts to twist the roots of her mother tongue to strange and unnatural usages, she approached her mother with the passionate declaration that if she had to give her life to the object she meant to invent a new language. The mother was a discerning woman. Looking thoughtful, she observed gently, "It's a great idea. But there are a good

many languages in the world now. I wonder if after all, we really need another one? However, I'll be glad to help you out if I can. If you get into difficulties come to me and we'll talk the matter over."

She never had to talk the matter over. In a few days the child had discovered for herself the absurdity of her ambition. But she began to cultivate herself in her mother tongue, discovering a latent talent for languages that afterwards led her to the study of several foreign tongues with unusual success. The natural taste had an eccentric outburst at the start but ended in a rational aspiration.

The fact that a strong bent leading toward a useful pursuit may show itself in a grotesque form in infancy, should deter us from ridiculing any singular occupation in a child that has a real end in view. There may be a genius in our midst without our knowing it. Often apparently dull children are the persons of gifted natures. It is not well for parents to believe that their geese are sure to turn out swans, but it is encouraging to recollect that many notable persons were hopelessly obtuse in their early youth. Daniel Webster was twice sent home from school as an "incorrigible dunce." Dr. Chalmers was

solemnly expelled from St. Andrews for the same reason, and Ludwig, the famous mathematician, was also sent away from school after four years' struggle with elementary arithmetic. This is a significant reflection on his teachers!

It is equally remarkable that the boy Chatterton — that "marvelous boy"— was considered a hopelessly dull child by his first teachers. Delmonichino, the artist, was dubbed by his discerning comrades "the ox" for his clumsy drawing, and it is said that Hogarth once excited energetic derision. The question must suggest itself to us whether we are capable of pronouncing judgment upon the abilities of others, especially at the incipient stage of effort. It is safer to be lenient where we are uncertain.

There are people who do not believe in shielding a child; in making its life "too tender." But they forget that it takes a very robust nature to outlive a shock or jar that stops the flow of mental energy. If it were possible to protect a child altogether from the influence of terror and from anger we should probably be surprised at its increased ability for mental effort. The child who is so surrounded by beneficent influences that he stores up no miserable mem-

ories to brood over is a thousand-fold blessed, for he is not hindered in his growth in intelligence. Who can say how much mental power one hateful memory can destroy!

In pleading for the sympathetic environment for the child, I by no means say that the atmosphere of home ought to be so soft as to be enervating. A mother should be able to brace her child by her counsel, uplift him by her wisdom and train him by her steady discipline. One of the first lessons she will find it well to set for him to learn is to be in earnest in whatever he undertakes; not to give up quickly, but to persevere to the end. "The thing I am most grateful to my mother for is that she taught me, from the time I can first recollect anything, to be *thorough*," observed a successful business man at an educational meeting. Upon looking backward many of us could give testimony to the importance attaching to this same lesson. I attribute much of a certain dogged patience that has carried me past some discouraging places, to the insistence of my father that I should always untie knots in strings when I was a child. I was never allowed to cut one with the scissors, but had to sit down and untangle the most intricate with

my small fingers, until the untwisting of knots became with me a sort of pride, and in my life I have seen but one I was unable to untie; and that was tied by a sailor! Not the work itself but the habit of thoroughness it engendered was the valuable lesson, and I have been glad since of the hard moments I spent on a stool, untying knots in rough string.

If a child is permitted to slur over his small tasks and leave everything half done he will go through life shirking larger duties as well as small ones, and end by being a drag upon his family and friends. From the time the baby can walk alone he should be taught to do things for himself, and to do them well. Let him come to have a pride in his work. Praise what is well done, and merely look grave over what is done ill. Scolding never made a good workman. Make the child critical of his own tasks, and bring him to have a conscience in his work, so that he will never be contented with "Well enough." Few men or women make failures of their lives who have learned in childhood to be thorough and in every task, small or large, to do their very best.

The influence of pictures and of mottoes on a child just beginning to learn to read is remarkable.

If there hangs in his room a picture with a meaning that relates to his own life, depicting some domestic scene pleasantly, as many pictures of the Dutch school do, he will probably never forget that particular picture or its meaning so long as he lives. And the illuminated mottoes bearing some wise but not pedantical saying, will engrave itself in his memory, and perhaps be an inspiration to him throughout the years. Suppose the beautiful epigram of Tennyson confronts a child each day from the foot of his bed: "Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control, these three alone lead life to sovereign power." Could he help being impressed despite himself, with the significance of these lines, or their bearing on his individual life? Or suppose him each day at breakfast, faced by such a home thrust as one rather popular in some households —"Life is only one darned thing after another." Will he be encouraged in well-doing by that? It takes a seasoned nature to throw off the shadow of a pessimistic philosophy. I have been thankful all my life for something that hung about my early home;—"Thoroughly to believe in one's own self, so one's own self were thorough, were to do great things."

Our early environment, our mother's influence, may make or mar us, not only morally but intellectually and practically. Ruskin was right when he said, "Scatter diligently in susceptible minds the germs of the good and beautiful. They will develop there to trees, bud, bloom, and bear the golden fruits of Paradise."

CHAPTER II

How Mothers May Help Each Other

"A Rennaisance tutor was appointed for Gargantua; the first thing he did was to administer a potion to the child to make him forget all that he had ever learned."—Painter.

THE fabled Gargantua was the model French boy whose entire training was faultless, after it was definitely taken in hand by the right tutors. But it appears that some poor instruction must have crept in during those early years when he had been left to ordinary teachers, for his first real teacher found it necessary to throw off all their influence — by administering a potion! There are many mothers who would like to have the recipe for that potion; who wishfully murmur, after rescuing their child from some injudicious advisor or companion,—"Oh, that I might someway make this child forget what he has just been taught by this person!"

But there is no way of doing it. A child's memory has a contrary way of cherishing up exactly that item which it is most desirable to obliterate from his mind. Some crass superstition imparted in secret by a stupid nurse, some narrow view impressed by a dull teacher, or a prejudice shared by a magnetic comrade will linger for years, perhaps for life. If it were possible to rear a child in a perfectly pure environment the result might not be satisfying, because all action must be balanced by reaction, and a nature grows as much by what it fights against as by what it accepts. This is the comfort we may take from the certainty that even the best guarded child will surely have many things in his experience to forget — to unlearn.

But the unlearning is a waste of energy that should be applied to other purposes. Fighting errors is good muscular exercise — after we recognize them as errors. But if a belief gets a real hold upon a young mind, and other ideas grow up, founded upon that, scarcely anything is more difficult than to replace all this material of thinking by another and contrary kind.

It has not yet been recognized that a great deal of

the early training of the child mind is farcical nonsense; a narrowing of his intelligence, a stupefying of his natural humanity. He gets the way of "hating this" and of "loving that," of bending down to artificial rules and rulers, and of hiding his honest sentiments for fear that they may be incorrect. His immediate and near-by associates are of course, his universe, and their opinions form his own. And of the stuff poured into his brain in the very earliest years will have to be made that ultimate belief about life which will sensibly influence his conduct to the end of his days. Who, for instance, can ever completely out-grow certain little fancies about the moon and stars, the clouds and mountains that were related to him when he was just beginning to ask questions about these natural mysteries? It would be a wonderfully interesting thing to trace throughout both the ignorant and the enlightened parts of the world the effect of such a tale as the almost universal myth of the "Pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!"

That is not in itself a harmful fancy, but it merely goes to show the tenacity of an idea sown on the plastic soil of infancy. Given then, the fact that early teaching is exceedingly important, in what prac-

tical way may a mother, having duties to herself, to the rest of her family, and to the world in general, eke out her limited resources and arrange for her child such an environment as may minister at all times to his best interests?

There is a wealth of material lying all about us, answering to every one of our needs; but we are usually too conservative and timid to appropriate it. The conservatism of the average mother is remarkable. She is really influenced very little by her knowledge and almost entirely guided by her inherited habits. That astute observer, Theodore Drieser, asserts that it is seldom principle, but usually habit that regulates all our minor acts. It is certain that a woman departs with the utmost reluctance from the beaten path in matters relating to her children, because she has to overcome such an amount of hereditary inertia that the effort is a kind of moral revolution.

Yet at the present moment women believe themselves thoroughly progressive. They have mothers' clubs in immense numbers, read radical papers on every theme, glow with enthusiasm on the subject of the new education — and go home to the same old grind of duties unrelieved by any of those new

methods that might bring joy and peace to a fretted household.

At a mothers' meeting which recently took place in a lively town, one bright woman rose at the end of some suggestive speech and asked plaintively, "I should like to know whether, after we have performed our motherly duties according to this advice, there will be any scraps of time left over for anything else?" And no one could answer her. How little women believe in co-operation! How reluctant they are to frankly avow a need and seek the aid required from one another! It takes a courageous as well as an original woman to strike out in a new path and try new ways. Any woman with common sense and firm will can do her sex a great service by merely carrying out some single good idea that occurs to her about the training of her child. A single innovation may carry light afar and spread around from a neighborhood to a foreign land. And how much she will effect for her own children! The most inexorable hardship of childhood is the inelasticity of home training. School teachers constantly introduce changes into their methods but parents obstinately keep to their old ways, so making home life contrast unfavorably with

the outer world. Yet the tone of a home should be lively and refreshing. But it cannot be so unless the mother is magnetic.

It is favorable to any change a mother may introduce that children eagerly welcome novelty. Young creatures suffer so much from monotony that even a change for the worse has its compensations. If they are to be bruised they prefer a new spot. But on the other side, it is better to build our plans upon a foundation that has been tested and rendered familiar, because children love persons and places they already know, and are apt to become terrified when confronted intimately with circumstances and persons they have never before met.

This the wise mother will take into account. When she is laying plans to get more time to read or to go out with her husband, without neglecting her little tots, she will not hastily turn them over to a strange nurse, nor send them to school to get rid of them. Above all, if she has a particle of foresight, and realizes the vital harm done to young nerves by too early contact with the bustle of the outer world especially in great cities, she will *not* take her young child downtown with her shopping, or to noisy shows,

or to nocturnal amusements of any sort whatsoever. The sight of a small child enduring agony at a moving picture show at eleven o'clock at night, being aroused from stupor to go into the keen night air with his nerves in a state of frenzy, is enough to make a sane person weep. Happily, the spectacle is less common than it used to be. Our grandparents in New England were required by law to attend meeting, and no adult might remain at home to care for a child old enough to go with its parents. This discreet age was fixed at so tender a period that the infants in arms were not exempt. But how great the difference between those somnorific old meeting houses and our modern bedlams of electric motion plays or terrifying business streets! No law now requires that a child shall accompany its parents anywhere. He may be left to cry alone or to roam the streets by himself, if it is so decreed by his autocrats.

There is another way. Lacking grandmother or kind aunt, and if there is not a trained attendant with at least a smattering of lore of the nature of kindergartens, mothers may supplement one another; may loan out their time and energies for mutual advantage, and by a judicious selection among themselves ac-

complish something like a miracle for their children. Would it not be an excellent thing if our child could spend a portion of his time each day with an expert instructor in some special branch of knowledge, or some adept in an art or piece of practical lore? It is practical, this ideal system. I have seen it tried, and with success.

In a certain select kindergarten in New York there were two small pupils who formed an exception to the rest of the class, inasmuch as they were looked after with more than ordinary zeal. Upon one side of the great sunny room left for visitors there frequently appeared the mothers of these two little maidens, and their motions were watched unobtrusively, silently, with loving, intelligent eyes. Both mothers were gentlewomen, and the able teacher needed no suggestions. But their interest in the educational method in process was so active that they were impelled to try to understand it. Consequently, they were enabled to help the little ones materially, by their companionship at home.

These two mothers were strangers to each other, and of all places in the world, Gotham is the hardest for women to break the social ice; but their common

interest in childhood drew them irresistibly together, and gradually they formed an acquaintance that was more than ordinarily congenial. Both their little girls, being only children in each instance, were delighted to visit at each other's houses and found recreation in occasionally breathing in the atmosphere of a home different from, yet not opposing, their own. Presently a third acquaintance in the person of the earnest, thoughtful stepmother of a nice little daughter, became admitted to the friendship of this small circle, and the three homes became alternate camping grounds for the youthful coterie.

Then it occurred to one of these women that on the afternoons that these little ones romped together it was not necessary for three adults to sit idly talking, to pass the time. There is too much to do in the world nowadays for nine adults to accompany one small child to the circus, as happened sometimes in old-fashioned rural districts. One watcher seemed to this more resourceful woman sufficient. The others might occupy their time more profitably. So she proposed to her friends to form a mutual benefit guild. The arrangement was that the children should spend alternate afternoons in company, and the mother who

was hostess for that day should take entire charge of the three little girls, leaving the other two mothers absolutely free to pursue their own plans from luncheon to bedtime. None of the women employed a nurse. They were all three devoted, conscientious mothers and would never have brought their minds to a state of contentment with any arrangement that was not best for their children. But here was an opportunity to give the little ones pleasant social intercourse and themselves long desired leisure to spend in intellectual enjoyments. So they eagerly embraced the chance. The little ones, already friends, were happy, and the mothers equally pleased.

Now out of this original device grew something much greater. Most discoveries are accidental, and this one was not an exception. It happened that all three of these women were specially gifted. One was a fine artist, another an accomplished musician, and the third an exquisite, scientific household manager. When their children's year of kindergarten training was accomplished and they were asking themselves with anxiety, what was to come next, in that dreary hiatus between kindergarten and school their consultation resulted in another idea. There

are in some advanced schools what are called "connecting classes," undertaking to provide for children until it is time for them to enter into routine work. "Suppose we do better than this," suggested one of the friends; "suppose we become mutual helpers in education?"

It was an idea to give pause. Not one of them particularly liked formal teaching, and two were averse to entering upon such a responsibility as the suggestion appeared to imply. Yet upon weighing all the advantages against the slight inconvenience of putting their rusting talents to active use, they were impelled to try the plan. It was not called, but was actually, in miniature, a neighborhood tutoring school, and of the rarest character, because the mercenary element was absent and the instructors were actuated by the spirit of doing exactly as they were done by. The arrangement was for one mother to take charge of the three little girls two days in each week, and give them lessons in housekeeping. With the gas range and grown-up paraphernalia it was doll housekeeping, glorified. What meals were prepared, what scientific house-cleanings for the doll's family accom-

plished, what lessons learned in the art of caring for babies and of what to do in emergencies! And all without pedagogic stiffness or enforced work. "No fear of homes dying out among us if the honest preferences of children are considered," observed the supervisor of these domestic lessons. "The baby heart is an honest, simple heart and will turn readily to the homely things of life if its attention is secured once. And it is to the wholesome, unspoiled baby nature that we must direct our efforts in domestic education. If ever lessons in household science can be given without pain and with bursts of glee it is with a doll's house for a background, and docile tots for learners, to whom the whole matter is almost play, but who work at it with the zeal that children throw into everything that really interests them. Do you know that a child absolutely likes work, if it is convinced that it is the same kind of work that grown people are doing? That is the secret; to make them participators of our own occupations. And the way to do it is first, to enter into theirs."

After a morning so spent, the afternoon was given to outdoor recreations, sometimes in the great city

play-ground, Central Park, oftener after a trolley ride that brought the troupe to the real country, where there was no "grass to keep off."

The second mother had undertaken the task of teaching her three charges the rudiments of music, but she made her lessons short if important and her play spells correspondingly longer. The vital point was that she conscientiously imparted during her brief half hour lesson something that was always remembered by the children, because there was the element of eternal truth in her excellent science. They were henceforth fortified against shallow, false music, and that is the most valuable thing about the divine art that can be learned in early life.

To the third mother had fallen the duty of supervising the three young persons in clay modeling and drawing. Of the first, she made an active pleasure, providing white clay on broad boards in the big kitchen, and skilfully turning the apparently spontaneous work of the trio to good account in molding fruits and every other conceivable object that might be imitated, and afterward, making crude but quite reasonable drawings of these self-constructed models. She learned the truth of what she had suspected, that

a child prefers to do the *whole thing,* and carry out in its completeness every idea he has a glimmering about, rather than to cooperate with a superior intelligence in something he believes his own. In other words, he is deeply interested when he supposes himself to be both designer and workman. An apple molded from clay and then copied in charcoal is a product of his own; it belongs to him, and after it is all done, he could eat it, from very joy of ownership!

The arrangement described here had the rare advantage of securing a group of specialists for each child, such as the most expensive private school could not excel, and this without any expense at all. Why should it not be adopted by other mothers of small families where the children crave companionship and change and they themselves crave leisure? Leaving out the item of special talent for art, there can be a very useful exchange made of other aptitudes among women. Every woman can do some little thing well. Let her teach her friend's child that thing in exchange for another sort of guardianship. Let us have less formality and more humanity among us!

There are two ways of rearing children — the one, to leave them in infancy to nurses, and later on, to teachers: the other, to supervise every step of their development from birth to maturity. For the mother who elects to do her duty there seems nothing possible but unremitting attention to maternal cares and consequent neglect of all other modes of usefulness. *Under present conditions.* But why in the world should any sort of absurd conditions hold, when an improvement is within our reach? Women are notoriously timid about introducing improvements into their way of living, a fact that entitles them to be called the " invariable element " in nature, while men are the originating element, consequently, variable. There was a time when men distrusted any departure from conventionality in the women of their households, and frowned down new ideas. But they are no longer doing it. They may be surprised when wife and mother devises some new and good thing, but they are delighted also. Perhaps they suspect that the germ of the bit of originality was in some occult way, filched from their own brains while they slept, and congratulate themselves in their sly power! Be that as it may, we have fallen into a bad habit of apathy

in this matter of child-training *versus* self-development, and need to look over the ground and see what we can do towards reform. The woman who neglects her home while she teaches the world how to think, legislate and act is not admirable in any aspect. "Mother is so busy in her educational work now that she is scarcely ever at home," announced a young high-school girl with innocent pride. The listener could only appreciate the humor of it without betraying sympathy.

Every experiment that helps to solve this problem of how to do justice to the rising generation without doing injustice to the retiring one, is of value. If "Youth will be served" then age must not be enslaved. The only way is to make of duty a joy and a release. Co-operation between parents is a key to the situation, and when the froth of talk about impossible methods of "child-training" filters down to practical meaning, it must occur to every sensible mother that to take advantage of the fact that many people want the same thing that she wants should be an inspiration to the right end.

Suppose that among a group of friends in a community there are three or four mothers with similar

ideals and almost equal capacities, inexperienced perhaps, in formal teaching, but possessing average education and therefore, ability to make time passed in their society useful and agreeable to the young. Well, instead of these women each devoting herself singly to the care of her separate offspring, and wearing nerve and spirit to atoms by the drudgery of an unvarying routine, it would be an immense relief and refreshment to themselves and their children, if they should exchange motherhood either regularly or at intervals. Leaving out the question of specific instruction, the society of a refined and educated mother is far more beneficial for the young child than that of either nurse or ordinary person. The feeling that she is doing a co-operative service, that as she is serving so she will be served, must be a stimulant to produce good results. Happy that child who has the advantage of such a community league! And happy must be that mother who realizes that in effecting a boon for herself she has also secured a wholesome and agreeable diversion for the home-bred child. He is safe-guarded and ministered to as he could not be in any other environment than a good home.

CHAPTER III

The Birth of Faculty

"Our start must be taken from a careful training of the senses in perception."— Ladd.

BACK of all our education stand our five senses. Upon them we depend for acquaintance with our environment, for the development of our intellect, and for the tone of our character. It is of the first importance that at his entrance into the world a child should be shielded from all shocks that might work injury to his delicate organs. It will make an enormous difference to him all through life if a single sense organ becomes injured; if it is even slightly incapacitated, so that the information he is meant to receive through that one source will not be received. Every one realizes, when the matter is distinctly put to them, that a person whose hearing, sight or sense of smell is less powerful than it normally should be, is handicapped. He must

work harder than a completely normal individual does, to get the same results, and he may never accomplish what he might under better conditions. Certainly, in order to make up a deficiency in one sense, his other senses will be required to do overwork, and are, consequently, likely to give out sooner than they should do. But unhappily, as our senses are not imperative in their demands upon public attention, like our features and legs, they are less likely to be considered important, so long as they are unobtrusive.

The child who is born deformed is from the first instant, comprehended and aided by science. Crooked noses are straightened, twisted limbs carefully attended to. Such defects stand out at once, and receive the treatment they demand. But a defective organ is not able to make an immediate appeal to sympathy. In the first place, the period when each sense normally comes to its powers varies with children. There is a standard, but comparatively few persons know or, at least, recollect it. It is, however, very important that a mother keep in mind several facts that bear upon the permanent welfare of her child in this connection.

The first sense to develop is that of taste. A baby distinguishes generally, when a few hours old, between sweet and sour, and prefers the former. As the taking of nourishment is his first need, it is quite natural that his earliest intelligent act should be to choose the sort of nourishment in accord with his preference! But occasionally, the child does not make such a distinction until he has been in this world for several days. His ability to do so should not be unduly delayed, and a mother ought to note whether the tiny newcomer is properly equipped with this gustatory sense, by offering him at least on the second day, both a sweetened and a bitter suck at something, that his subsequent remarks upon the matter may be observed. They will be, of course, merely facial expressions!

The second sense in order of development is that of smell. To learn whether this sense organ is normal the baby may be approached by his nurse with a bottle of strong smelling salts. The wrinkling of his nose, or absolute indifference, is significant of his power to distinguish odors. But possibly, and not from any fault of his organs, he may confuse smell with taste, and try to suck the thing held to his nose.

Babies have been known to suck at flowers, liking their fragrance. Several experiments, made at intervals, can establish the point beyond dispute.

The third sense, the cutaneous, or sense of touch, comes more slowly. Some children suffer immediately from an excess of cold or heat, but very few indeed, are able to show their discomfort, so it is generally assumed that unless the appeal made is strong, they are indifferent to changes of temperature at first. But this mental indifference must not make us oblivious to the fact that their physical welfare is greatly affected by climatic changes. Warmth is their native element, and they should not be allowed to be cold, under any circumstances. This is, accurately speaking, the cutaneous sense, not touch.

Preyer, whose observations upon this subject are entitled to great respect, asserts that *every* child is born completely deaf. Yet I have known at least two exceptions. Usually, though, his remark holds true. Sometimes hearing does not develop until several days elapse; but in the case of a child of intelligent and mentally active parents, and particularly, when the parents are musically inclined, it is not rare for hearing to show itself as soon as the second day. For-

tunately, the new-born infant hears with difficulty at first; otherwise, he would be dreadfully disturbed by the noisy world into which he has entered. A careful mother will try to have the young baby kept as quiet as possible; safe-guarded from abrupt, loud voices and from all jarring sounds. His nerves will benefit much by this care.

Children, like kittens, are born without capacity to see at all. The pretty, open eyes are sightless. But after a few days they distinguish between light and darkness, then, by degrees, between large objects. But this power of vision varies even more than it does in the other senses. Sensibility to strong light is certainly present when the sight is normal. The baby is unpleasantly affected by powerful illumination and ought to be guarded from a glare, either of sunshine or artificial light. The dawn of life has its natural accompaniment of soft and gentle glow of light.

Now it is evident that the children of parents who are fortunately so situated that they are able to give their children from the very first, all the care and attention, all the scientific training that may be secured by consultation with excellent physicians and that

conduces so greatly to their welfare, start them off in life with infinitely better chances than can parents who are able to do much less. Infinite are the sense maladies of the children of the poor! But by special care in the early days of a child's life a mother may confer upon him the rare boon of healthy sense organs, unless there is present from the beginning a defect or weakness; and in that case timely attention may remedy the trouble.

With the physical organs in good working order, the next thing is the training of the sense perceptions. Of what use is a superior capacity which is permitted to lie dormant, until chance awakens it? The difference between the ill-cared for child and the shielded one is quickly manifest in the degree of attention that is given to his sensations, those mental accompaniments of his perceptive organs that he expresses in the language of cries or cooes of pleasure. Out of sensations comes all our moral life. It is a tremendous thought. Hunger unappeased will bring about crime in the adult, in the child, revolt against conditions to the extent of embittered disposition and permanent ill-temper. Fear, the next sensation to develop, too early or too profoundly aroused, may make a coward or

a sneak of a timid nature. Rightly managed it is a force in education that has a distinct value. But it is more abused than any other sensation of childhood.

Some renowned authors have written feelingly of "the bugaboos of childhood"; those phantoms of the imagination that were aroused by tales of ignorant nurses or vicious comrades, or even, unhappily, by thoughtless parents, too deficient in imagination themselves to apprehend the results of terror upon more sensitive natures. As we understand the strength of this sensation, the earliest to awaken, the last to die in a human being, we must be moved to treat it with extreme caution, and shield our child from any frights that might seriously interfere with his mental development. A severe terror in infancy has been known to bring on convulsions, lasting for years. Many unaccountable mental deficiencies might be traced to such a source, many eccentricities explained by the same experience. We cannot estimate the harm which may arise from one fit of terror, or even from one abnormal idea of fear that gets root in the nature of a young child.

How profoundly is the child at the mercy of his guardians! There is, indeed, one salutary check upon

their powers. The child belongs not only to his parents but to his species, his race, his entire family. Heredity has molded him. The efforts of kindly or careless hands can beautify or mar, but cannot change his form. We should not over-estimate the effects of education. Every family, every institution, can show children subjected to the same kind of training who have grown into beings as utterly dissimilar as if they were the products of different nurtures. When we begin to divine the true nature of the little being who seems so receptive we can aid him in the development of that special character which is to mark him out as a separate atom from the great troupe of his generation. And to watch for indications of this individuality and seize upon them as foundations of our best work is something we must constantly bear in mind.

But happily for us education is a synthetic process. The general should, in the true order, come before the particular. Science has done so much for us in the way of giving us rules, that we need only to apply them. It would be unfortunate indeed, if each parent were obliged to repeat personally, all the experiments that scientists have practised upon their offspring for

the benefit of the world! When Mr. Preyer hurried his five-minutes-old son to the window to note the effect of light upon him, when Malebrance tried the effects of heat and cold upon a tiny stranger and Darwin that of sounds, the good result followed of giving the world some reliable facts about infant development upon which may be founded a practical psychology. Those infant pioneers suffered in a good cause. But now we may profit by all these experiments, without subjecting our own little ones to endless trials.

One thing that is generally admitted is that each child passes swiftly through the general phases of racial development; that he is at first more animal than human, later on, chiefly savage, and gradually takes on the nature of his species and his family. But one thing must be noted; all the work done by man for his own mental and moral benefit has borne results. The infant of the twentieth century, coming of an average good family, is not so much a little savage as the offspring of the gipsy or Esquimo. Traditions of gentleness and high aspirations have passed into his blood. He is "the heir of the ages" and begins where his predecessors have left off. And the

child of a modern cultured family is not either on exactly the same level as the hereditary tramp or the day laborer. He has an advantage over them. Our little one has gained through the culture of his parents and grandparents a predisposition toward certain pursuits and acts which enables him to leap at a bound over experiences that less advanced natures must slowly fight their way through. But an overworked field becomes barren. And a family that has persisted for generations in one sort of work uses up, finally, all the energy that is in store of the kind needed for that kind of work; then degeneration sets in. Perhaps this is why pursuits that demand hard brain labor, like music, literature and science, are seldom adopted by many successive generations, but are avoided for a time, and then taken up again.

The child of good family will naturally be possessed of finer sense perceptions than those of ignorant parentage. Something more is contained in this expression than the mere ordinary use of the senses. The woodsman, constantly on the alert for sounds, probably passes to his offspring a keenness of hearing that is of the greatest advantage to him in the ordinary affairs of life. But if he turned out of his way to

enter upon the study of music, he would not find that his keen hearing gave him any better apprehension of harmony. The feeling for melody is a distinct thing; a higher development of the sense perception. It is the natural heritage of the musician's child, surrounded from the first by an atmosphere of music. To him possessed only of the outer sense organ, without the inner accompaniment of sensibility, there can be no understanding of delicate shades of meaning. Sensibility, then, is one of the attributes of faculty. It should not be confused with abnormal sensitiveness, which comes from diseased nerves. It is, in other words, the power to discriminate readily, to detect differences.

This power should be assiduously cultivated in the small child. Of course a very nice judgment is necessary in giving to the awakening intelligence of a mere baby just sufficient stuff to occupy his healthy desire for activity, and not enough to weary his feeble brain. He must be watched, and the instant he shows signs of fatigue, must rest. Perhaps it is best that no actual effort be made to arouse his attention until he shows an interest in his surroundings. Children differ materially in this respect. Some infants of three

months are restless without a kind of mental occupation from time to time. A wandering gaze about their rooms, a faint endeavor to lay hold of some object near them, a *wish to be amused* indicates that advanced state of impatience which characterizes the offspring of very active parents, in this progressive age. Whether this sign of interest in the outside world comes at three months, at six, or later, let the parent beware of entering upon silly or exciting pastimes to quiet the child. If his mind is awakening, then let him have something to satisfy his mind; not be jerked about on a physical pivot. Nurses imagine that a restless infant must be moved about; must have his body wearied that his nerves may be quieted. Try, instead, hanging three bright downy balls over the baby's crib; one yellow, one red and the other blue. Let them dangle there for some little time. Then, name them to him. Touch first one, then the others, as they are named. Presently, get the baby to pick them out himself. It may take weeks before he can do it. If it should take three months, do not be discouraged. Swing the balls softly about so that he may get an idea of motion without noise. It is a great advantage in education to *separate* impressions,

making them single instead of complex. It is not generally known that most babies get an untrue impression about noise, associating it with rapid movement, so that they become frightened sometimes from sounds that they suppose capable of enveloping them bodily.

The first year of a baby's life must be given over chiefly to his physical functions; yet, his mental training cannot be left altogether out of the question. Without any urging, he will usually show signs of wanting something beside "bread, cheese and kisses"; something for his mind to wrestle with. At this early period, and for a long time to come, his training must be entirely through associations. Let certain acts that are pleasant to him, such as giving him nourishment, be associated with certain other states that should be emotionally agreeable. It has seldom been thought of, but is an excellent thing to do, to have a music box in the nursery to play soothing melodies, and set it in motion about meal time. If you want your baby to develop a taste for music, then try this!

One of the first things to find out is whether your child has begun to seek for the whys and wherefores

of happenings. When he throws his bottle on the floor and looks with interest at the broken glass and spilled milk, do not accuse him of naughtiness; at least, unless he shows signs of temper. If he has merely a casual interest in the occurrence, as any philosopher would have in an experiment, can you not afford a few broken bottles to satisfy his mind? But when he discovers that his dinner has gone along with the bottle, it may be well to explain to him that he will have to wait awhile until another bottle can be found. If simple words are employed, accompanied by appropriate gestures, a very young baby can understand many events that relate to his comfort.

Making a tinkling noise with a spoon against his plate is one of the early pastimes of the baby who begins to sit up in his high chair. If there is some one at hand to explain something about these things to him, saying and showing by example, *how* such sounds are produced, he will quickly apprehend some very significant facts. The best boon of infancy is an observant mother, ready to note, listen, and aid her small child in all the experimentings he makes with his limited world material.

One of the mistakes made is careless establishment

of associations. At first, only things that have unvarying relations with each other, such as a watch with its ticking sound, a ball with its tendency to whirl, a bell with its noisy clapper, and other certainties in circumstances, should be brought to the attention of the child. I should rather say, that nothing at all must be brought to his attention; let him attend to what pleases him; then be ready to show him the inner meaning of what he has fastened upon.

A mother's voice is naturally pleasant to the baby. He will listen to it and attend to it, especially if she takes pains to modulate it agreeably, and in this preference of the child resides a meaning that she should not neglect. Tone color, differences of pitch, and qualities in voice, might be made one of the earliest modes of mental and moral training of infancy, if parents were careful and intelligent in the use of this power. Long before words are comprehended tones interest the mind of the child. The parent who knows how to employ what is called the "didactic" tone, or that of mild authority, will have little trouble about making his reasonable commands obeyed. The mother with the sympathetic cadence developed in her voice may win her little one's heart confidences

without any effort. While she who is gifted with the sprightly, joyous quality has the natural superiority of the leader, and has only to choose the path she wills to pursue to be followed blindly or at least, happily, which is better.

A droning voice is sometimes restful but oftener irritating to an intelligent child. The voice full of inflections helps him to understand language. Animals talk by inflections; the small child tends to use them continually. This is why his little voice constantly runs up to sky-high pitches. Let a mother be wise to this fact, and rather consider a high pitch a sign of nervous energy than of nervous irritability.

CHAPTER IV

Through Play to Work

"To elicit interested attention in the right objects and actions is the principal problem in the culture of infantile life."— Ladd.

IN regard to the training of children we are not so much in need of new knowledge as of the disposition to apply what we already know. For even the ordinary old nurse, who has cared for many little ones in her day, will have learned facts that inevitably lead her to the right conclusions. Take the instance of her laying stress upon the date her little charge begins "to take notice." Greatly as this period differs among infants, according as their senses are more or less developed and their muscular systems strong or weak, it is a landmark in their lives. From the instant they begin to recognize the objects that surround them they become individuals. For capacity to "take notice" is the

first sign of mental power. It is inherent and where it is altogether lacking we may be sure that there is some organic defect calling for skilful remedial medical treatment.

As noted in the last chapter, one of the first things to attract the child's notice is usually his mother's voice, especially as he associates it with being taken up and fed. Then musical sounds begin to affect him. Let all efforts to please him in this matter be of very short duration. It may be hard for the baby to check an inhibition toward fixity of attention if it is too vivid. That will end in emotional excitement. Every one knows that a child whose attention has been overstrained becomes fretful.

It is a singularly stupid mistake to begin the education of the child by a series of negations. The deterring force constantly applied will dull the brightest wits. Instead, the beginning should be positive. The little one of a year old seeks some active way of putting his fresh knowledge about an associated pair of acts in operation; let him have his chance. He finds that by pulling on a certain knob he can open a drawer. How absurd it is to immediately make of that act a means of moral training by saying, "No,

no, baby mustn't do that!" Or he wants to tear up paper and scatter it on the floor. There is no harm in it. But after a sufficient amount of paper has been scattered to satisfy him he may be gently taught to pick it all up. That is relating construction with the natural propensity of destruction and teaching a valuable lesson.

Sometimes we forget that ideas of conduct are not inherent; that there is no good or bad in the small child's vocabulary, and that these words mean no more to him than yellow or blue. If only we could divine the workings of infant intellects more accurately, we should possibly hear some tiny tot saying to itself — 'What do these grown folks mean by not letting me learn things the way I can learn them?" One day a mite of two years, perched on her father's knee, reached over to handle an object on his desk, which he detached gently from her hand, saying, "That is one of the things Dot must not touch." Picking up something else, she observed calmly, "That's two of them." She had not begun to apprehend any moral relation between acts and wants. And her parent was wise enough not to enforce it at the time.

The best means of arousing interest in an occupa-

tion is just to suggest something to be done, repeating the same suggestion at intervals, until in the trackless waste of the infant's brain a channel is worn along which impressions may easily proceed. Gradually and cautiously we may hold the child's attention for longer and longer periods, observing the effect upon him and gently encouraging him in those efforts toward self-control which must be very often renewed before he attains the power to concentrate his mind upon whatever he undertakes.

This, which is the greatest of intellectual feats, is the basis of all his future education and development. To be able to *attend* with all one's mind to the thing that is present, to put aside other and contradictory emotions or ideas and concentrate entirely on a single one is an achievement for an adult. How much greater an achievement for a little child! His act of attention means that he has selected, out of the different things that engage his wandering senses, something whose claim is stronger than those of other matters. But he is incapable of making any such selection. Chance, or suggestion from outside decide for him. But if the suggestion is feeble it holds him for a very short time; then his mind wanders

again. How are we to aid him to fix his attention?

The element of surprise is of the greatest value. A small shock, not sharp enough to be uncomfortable, but distinct enough to cause an immediate separation from more passive impressions, arouses the child's mind to activity in the direction desired. Here we see the truth of the new view of education when it declares that "interest is the life of teaching." Unless an interest can be created there is no real attention, but merely its deceitful counterfeit. There is a great deal of talk at this moment about the necessity of "a thrill" in stories to make them interesting to adults. We must have "shockers" even if they are also masterpieces. Indeed, nothing is admitted to be a masterpiece now that has not in it this "thrill." Carrying out the hint we may say that a child instinctively demands "the thrill" in his story. He too, wants to be made to wonder, to laugh and to weep. Why not? The world is a vast wonder-house to the new-comer and all full of marvels. May he not have the pleasure of dwelling upon their singular features for a space, before being made to linger wearisomely on the less interesting ones?

Now, what is most likely to strike the little child as an unique, startling fancy? He has no conception of the grotesque yet, or of the awful, excepting as he is able to compare a new thing with his few impressions of the normal. For instance, being habituated to seeing his mother's face in certain relations with her dress he is amused upon her assuming an absurd head-dress, like a paper cap. His father with a toy balanced on his dignified head is a comical sight. He clamors for repetitions of such absurdities. It is because the contrast with his ordinary experiences is very marked that his entertainment is made out of it. If his mother had always worn a paper cap or his father a toy horse on his hair, do you suppose master Charles, at three, would find such an exhibition funny? Again, having had a few years' experience of quiet country life, we will say, and being suddenly changed to the city, the contrast strikes him with astonishment, and in every new aspect of familiar objects he sees fresh reason for wonder. It is the *start* given to his perceptive faculties that sets them into activity.

Upon this hint, that some kind of radical departure from the habitual is the best way of getting the child's

attention, we may base our efforts to secure his preference for the object in which we wish to enlist his interest. Start out with some novel feature in your little piece of work. If you wish the little one to learn to build with blocks, do not go on in a slow, unmeaning way, methodically planning to get some result about which he knows and cares nothing. But strike at once to the heart of the matter. Say, perhaps, "Look at your little donkey, dear, he has no home to go to and he is tired. See how his head droops. Let's make him a house. What sort of one does he like? Let's try what we can do." The child will almost certainly set to work with his interest stimulated in the toy donkey, whom he already knows, and reaching forth to an unexplored novelty, a donkey-house, which he does not yet know. This is "proceeding from the known to the unknown," as the great Herbert Spencer would have said, and is sensible.

Inducing the little child to play for quite a while at a single sort of play, is the right means of helping him to concentrate his attention. And it can be easily done if we start out with the keen stimulus of awakened interest in the unknown. If nursery plays

proceeded oftener upon the *motif* of the adult detective story, the child mind would benefit. This is the natural *motif* constantly present in nature. To discover a mystery, to investigate, to penetrate beneath the surface of things, is the mightiest pleasure intellectual men and women can have. And to the smallest child also, a mystery is a shivery delight. Not necessarily a painful mystery. We must spare them that; but an awakening puzzle. Any play that is too simple in its meaning is tiresome to the child. Yet, simplicity is only a thing of experience, and what is a problem one day ceases to be one the next. It is a happy sign when a child will work patiently at one thing until he masters its intricacies and thereafter loses all interest in it. Long enough is long enough. Never make a pursuit tedious to an active mind.

It is certainly worth while for us vigilantly to cultivate in our young children the power of persistent attention. Yet nothing is ordinarily more neglected. Instead of a training in patience and perseverance our nursery regime usually permits an endless succession of unfinished pursuits, of capricious pastimes. The child of two or three is perpetually amused, and his attention diverted so rapidly from one thing to an-

other that he forms a habit of shifting it upon the slightest occasion. And as he is expected to tire of everything quickly, he supposes that is the proper thing to do.

Very rarely nowadays do we see a little one amuse himself an hour or so at a time with a single play. And when we do see such a child we may believe that we have fallen upon a genius. "If I in any way excel other men," said Sir Isaac Newton, "it is in the power of patient thought." But this power to think long and deeply is the most remarkable trait a mind can possess. Superficial people cannot chain themselves for any length of time to hard mental work: merely clever ones dart from one object to another with a fitfulness that sometimes seems like brilliancy but has no lasting quality. But the capacity to dwell for a long time upon one thought involves both intensity of desire and innate ambition to reach right results.

I have seen this struggle for perfection show itself in an incipient form in a little child but eighteen months old. And how sincerely I respected that little one. He was sitting on his mother's lap beside the library table one evening, when in an idle mood she

took up a penny and set it on the head of a small gilt image about three inches high and with a head scarcely larger than the coin. Seeing that the baby watched her she said playfully, "Baby can't do that!" The little one's brown eyes sparkled with a look that seemed to say, "Oh, can't I?" And taking the penny in his fingers he essayed to balance it as she had done. It fell. "Oh," said baby quietly, and picking it up tried again, with the same result. Without the least sign of impatience or discouragement, the little thing tried over and over again for seventeen times, until at last he succeeded in balancing the coin on the head of the image.

The brave baby! We gave him a round of applause, and he looked from one to the other of us with a curious little glance of satisfaction. The next day he could not be persuaded to undertake the same feat again. Once having demonstrated that he could do it the act lost its interest. Here was a tiny hero in want of difficulties to conquer; an infant Newton, excelling in the ability to concentrate his whole mind upon a single object so long as it was necessary for that object to absorb his attention, and then putting it behind him while he advanced to something beyond.

Few little children, of course, voluntarily set themselves to overcome difficulties, yet more would do so if parents and nurses were not in the habit of catering to that flightiness characteristic of all young things, which leads them to follow up whatever momentarily attracts their attention. If the stimulus of surprise alluded to above, was accompanied by the strong mental sensation of aroused desire to excel, or at least, to equal an example, the child would much more readily develop power of concentration.

But education in this respect must not go too fast. To fatigue a growing power is to stunt it. The little one's interest in a new thing may be held by the parent just so long as he does not show signs of fatigue, but after that the persistence in work is an injury to him. Ordinarily, there is a drooping of the body, a shifting of position from one foot to the other, a droop of the eye-lids, betraying bodily languor when the little brain becomes over-taxed. When this occurs we must at once change the subject. To rest the mind let the body become active. An out-door play is the right alternative to an in-door pursuit, but even a little game with the windows open is sufficient to change the atmosphere for a child, who happily, re-

cuperates from fatigue as quickly as he yields to it.

One of the best ways of teaching a small child to fix his attention is to enlist his fancy. Upon this law of attraction Froebel built his system of educational plays. When the little one of three or four enters the kindergarten he is pretty sure of some good mental training, although this depends more upon the teacher than is generally known. All kindergarten teaching is not Froebel training, by any means. But the majority of children are spoiled for the best results before they enter the kindergarten because they are not trained from infancy to like anything strongly; to attach themselves to a single object or pursuit. The baby who shows persistent liking for one toy, for one play over and above all others, is a hopeful object. For this capacity for preference is a sign of the disposition that has within it tenacity of purpose.

A mother who has at heart the true interest of her child will leave nothing undone to attach that child very early to some particular kind of activity, were it merely kite-flying. If she can arouse a deep interest in beetles, in machinery, in railroading, in artistic doll-dress-making, in the making of fudge, so that

her boy learns to use energy without stint in constructing his miniature railroad, her girl develops capacity to make better fudge than any of her little friends, she will have accomplished a great deal. We must rescue the child from the bog of vagueness and lift him on to the sure ground of purpose and design. The only hopeless child is one who cares about nothing. His hold on life is so loose that it is like the worst form of pessimism in an adult. But a deep attachment to any honest pursuit is a saving grace for the idle, a spur to the able child.

We should permit our child great freedom in his early attachments if we aim to increase his faculty of persistent attention. At first our only hold upon him is through his desire for immediate enjoyments. Time does not exist for the very young. To defer a reward too long is to discourage their efforts. Let them see a thing near enough to get the flavor of it in their present. Let them get enjoyment out of the thing itself, instead of out of some future result. How the world has changed for all of us in three decades! We can remember when work was called drudgery and reward held out for its performance, when days were bitter that evenings might be pleasant.

But the newer, brighter philosophy knows that Shakespeare's beautiful eulogy of effort was an inspiration that will last forever; and that it is and will always be true that "Joy's soul is in the doing."

The child is a diviner. He feels that there ought to be joy in work, and if there is not something is wrong. In fact, because there is not yet any coordination in his muscles and nerves, all effort is work and play to him at the same time. He calls throwing stones in the water, work. To turn his vagueness into purpose we may show him how to direct his stones toward a certain point. When he learns to aim he has learned to control some wandering impulses. The deft, silent but persistent infusing of purpose into the plays of childhood is the best kind of teaching a mother can attempt. The instant we succeed in kindling the spark of ambition within the small breast the rest is easy. We may thereafter direct him to occupations that are not entirely agreeable at first sight, as he views them, but promise enjoyment later on, when skill has been gained. And with this we set our child the first great lesson of life; that steady attention to the work undertaken is the only way to gain permanent satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

The Mother Tongue

"There is an easily conceivable state of things that would dispense entirely with school instruction in the mother tongue."— Bain.

ENGLISH is sometimes called "the grammarless language"; but many of us will recall certain dull old text books of a past generation that made spring afternoons disagreeable to us, shut within the walls of the school room, conning over and over again, the phrases that were set us to parse. And what was the use of it all? Only to stuff the memory with a dross that experience was at some pains to cast off. The study of English grammar does not impart capacity to speak the language correctly. It merely confirms knowledge previously gained. Unless the child grows up in an atmosphere of culture he will have great trouble in acquiring the fluent use of his mother tongue.

The great difference between children of cultivated parents and those whose early surroundings were sordid, is manifest in their capacity for expression. The well reared child uses language with complete ease and naturalness; even the niceties of expression coming from him with unconscious imitation of his elders at home. He has the advantage of a large vocabulary, being thereby enabled to draw fine distinctions; than which there is no more important feature of education. I have known children of three-and-a-half years capable of appreciating the delicate shades of meaning in such words as "inclination," "naturally," "temperament" and other less common words. And such familiarity with the mother tongue may come without the least effort if the child is always talked with as if he was an intelligent being, not a toy.

From feeling and doing, the child passes to speaking. For the first eighteen months he will compass little more than the mastery of the elemental sounds —"ba, da, la, ma," etc. And these it has ever been the delight of mothers to teach their little ones. What a proud day it is when baby utters two syllables consecutively, and lisps out unintentionally, that name soon to become the synonym of his earthly hap-

piness —"mama!" Through the quick response made to this vague call he gets his first lesson in naming objects, or word-teaching. And henceforth he proceeds to give names to everything that interests him, twisting appellatives in his efforts to imitate and so building up that peculiar lingo known as "baby language."

The temptation to adopt this quaint, distorted dialect when talking to babies continually besets lovers of children, who feel a natural impulse to bring themselves down to the level of infantile understanding. But we should recollect that it is no compliment to the person we desire to please, to repeat his imitations. If there really were such a thing as baby language, originated by infants and founded upon a different plan from our own, we might judiciously adopt it temporarily. But "baby lingo" is merely a struggling, incomplete mother tongue, the earnest attempt of the little mind in our midst to adapt itself to adult ways of communication. Is it not unjust to throw this little toiler back on his own resources? True sympathy would impel us to rather aid his toil by teaching him, bit by bit, as he is able to follow, the nomenclature which is to give him power to express

his own personality and link him to human life and thought.

How early the child gets a sense of its own identity is a puzzling question. Usually it repeats its own name soon after it can repeat the syllables, with apparent reference to itself. At twenty months it is safe to say that the normal child realizes itself as a personage, separate from others. It then begins to make a kind of stand for its personal rights, its ego assuming importance in its own eyes. Some children begin to say " I " about this time, but ordinarily, the habit of alluding to himself by the name others call him by holds for the first two or three years. In this matter, there should be no interference; let the child call himself anything he likes; let him give any odd name to things that may tickle his fancy; only, we should not *aid* him in any eccentricity, by helping him to give fancy names to objects. What the little one does of his own accord is not amiss; his small errors will drop away as he corrects himself by comparison with adults. But if adults themselves talk nonsense with whom may he compare himself for his improvement?

It is perhaps, hard to adopt the golden mean and

neither aid too fast nor hinder over much. Our plan must be to let the child learn of his own impulse, rather than to teach him deliberately to talk. He will learn swiftly and surely, through the tendency to imitate, if we are careful to set good models before them. "Did she *ever* talk baby talk?" asked the kindergarten teacher, when my three-and-a-quarter-year-old little girl entered her class. A shy, silent tot she was, but her tongue once loosened she uttered her fancies as well as most children of thrice her age. Without any consciousness of her advantage, because she was in the habit of using words as her home circle used them.

There ought not to be any effort made to "talk down" to little ones. But we should be careful to make every word we use very distinct, clear and perfect in enunciation. It is probably inevitable that children hear some slang; it is unfortunately, one of the kinds of dross housekeepers do not sweep out in the spring house-cleanings. But the person who takes pains to teach some tot a bit of slang, purely for the fun of hearing the infant tongue lisp the twisted syllables, or shout the meaningless phrase, deserves the punishment that he will get from having that phrase

dinned in his ears endlessly, in season and out of season. I recollect a young army officer who thought it comical to instil into a three-year-old boy an acquaintance with some choice army slang, and who was unable to make a call at that house for months afterwards without feeling the rush of a small body against his own, while the shout rang in his ears — "I'll put a head on you, I'll put a head on you!" until he wished he had never been so smart. Now it is certain that our child will learn all the slang that is good for him outside, in the street, or at school; we need not help this side of his training. On the other hand, it is not wise to insist on the absolutely accurate pronounciation of all words he uses for the first time. It is discouraging to the two-year-old disciple of culture. It is better to correct his mistakes indirectly, by being accurate in our own pronunciation. Bright children readily accept suggestions and do not need perpetual drill.

Certain quaint idioms grow up in nearly all nurseries and may be tolerated while they last. Children with a spice of originality are pretty sure to invent names for things, either because the names we tell them are too hard for their undisciplined

tongues, or through some capricious impulse. For instance, a small boy always would say "bow-wop" instead of the more usual "bow-bow" for dog, and a little girl of fifteen months invented for her bottle of milk the queer title "bobbetty-ann," which continued as a household phrase for several weeks.

The child with a musical ear — and Preyer says that no child whose hearing is normally constituted is entirely unmusical — acquires not only words, but accents infallibly. And as the rule is in all pedagogical codes — *Never to teach the child anything he will have to unlearn* — it is supremely desirable that the little one be surrounded from the first with persons whose speech is not only free from the grosser errors, but refined. We have advanced so far as to banish the stuttering nurse, although she possess angelic virtues; let us go further and root out the brogue of the "good-hearted" Irish girl, with her supposed attachment to her charge and her uncurbed temper which makes her discipline as rough as her tongue. "Ole mammy" has vanished by natural process, and while we yearn for the graces of manner and juvenility of mind which made the transplanted African an incomparable nurse, we may

congratulate ourselves that her unforgetable murder of English is a thing of the past.

How they stuck — those perversions of speech! I recollect how much pains my father — a Northern man married into a Southern family — took with me in my tender years, regarding the substitution of "them" for "those," which is one of the commonest errors of the African. And how relentless he was in penalties for the employment of the double negative. Thanks to him, I passed unscathed through the language ordeal of a colored nurse and child comrades with a singularly slip-shod vocabulary. But the triumph was hardly earned by a wondrous unpopularity and the charge of being a "little miss Dictionary." The school child makes the path of superiority hard. The compensations, however, enable one to bear with some satisfaction the little discomforts of that swift-gliding epoch.

The careful mother allows no one to care for her little ones whose speech is notably deficient in grammatical construction. Sprightly Master Charles and little Miss Dora are too much on the alert to add new words to their vocabulary for it to be safe to trust them with any species of ignoramus. Yet, de-

spite good care, most persons whose lives are passed out in the world, not among books, retain in maturity some crude accents learned in childhood. When they speak correctly they are affected. Fluent elegance results from that right usage early in life which makes pure language "second nature." Nothing more infallibly denotes the best breeding, for slovenly enunciation and slang terms are so prevalent even in excellent schools that the young person who speaks the mother tongue with a pure accent at once establishes his superior training.

Professor Charles Eliot has expressed himself very earnestly on the subject of the supreme importance of culture in the mother tongue. He goes so far as to declare that person well educated who has a good education in English, though he may be lacking both in the classics and science. Some sacrifice, some particular attention, is therefore, not too stringent a demand to make upon the parent who wishes to secure for his offspring this rare and fine culture. For it is rare. With the general relaxation of all rules of propriety for our young people nowadays, we have lately excused them from the necessity of speaking good English. The talk of the grammar school

child, just dismissed from the class room, is appalling. Everything is apparently, to be learned; the school has been able to do almost nothing in the way of practical insight into the beauties of language and the obligation of a correct use of the mother tongue. Nor does the current literature of the day afford any assistance, such as the older literature, stilted and unnatural as it was in many respects, did afford. I observe that in modern fiction which deals with the talk of upper class children, their talk is far below that of their parents. They say "you ain't"—"as never was," "drawed" for drawn, and so on. It is no wonder, if this is a photograph of life and they are allowed to talk in this way at home, that school teachers find it impossible to convey to their lower grades a practical knowledge of grammar. It must seem to the ordinary child as dead a tongue as Hebrew. It is what we hear daily, what enters into our ordinary existence, that gets hold of us.

It is essential then, even at the risk of making our child what is called "priggish" in the eyes of his unlettered comrades, to impress upon him the absolute necessity of using only pure speech. Let it be simple and unadorned when he is with his crowd;

but at least, not faulty. If he finds it indispensable in play, to bring in a popular slang term, let it be as a superficial tag that can be easily dropped again. The use of correct language does not constitute any restraint upon the life, liberty or happiness of a young person. It is as easy to talk brightly and cheerfully in pure accents and with the use of irreproachable terms as in the foulest vernacular. Children, however, seek for *strong* expressions; simple, concrete words with a tang to them. And this is an indication of the superiority of Saxon words for every-day use. How much better is it, for instance, to teach a child to express the idea of living in a house by the respectable word — full of associations —"dwell" instead of the affected "reside" which I have heard little girls fling out with an air that marked them imitators of some "refined" nurse. Only persons with a real gift for feeling word values can appreciate the difference between the sensations evoked in the untaught child mind by various words that have invisible links with certain thoughts. Yet there are magnetic words; for instance, to tell a child to "rest," brings with the very suggestion something almost irresistible. He may protest that he is not

tired; yet the word "rest" is soothing; it has a concrete meaning and leads to an action. While the phrase that is so often thoughtlessly dinned into heedless little ears—"be quiet!" is provocative. It suggests a suppression, an inhibition leading away from desire, and is in the nature of a command contrary to personal wishes.

Parents should be careful about using two words that are commonly misplaced and lead to mental confusion in the child. They are "look" and "see." Some instinct tells the child that he ought not to be required to *see* everything he *looks* at. He may be looking, with all his might and yet fail to *see* the thing that his attention is being drawn to. "I am looking!" the little one cries out, and becomes irritated at being accused of not attending. *Seeing* is a mental act, yet not one person in many discriminates between observing a thing with the eye, and perceiving the meaning of it, inwardly. If we are so careless in the separation of ideas how can we expect to make ourselves intelligible to a child? It is correct to say, when we wish to direct the little one's attention to an object;—"Look at that dog, dear. Do you *see* what a nice expression he has?" While

it would be entirely wide of the mark to ask him to "look" at the dog's amiable face, because the animal's amiability is a quality, not an object, and to be apprehended by the mind alone. If a mother will spend a little time in thinking out the significance of the words most in common use when she is conversing with her child, and clearly distinguishing between those that denote *acts* and those that refer to thoughts only, she will avoid some of the worst pit-falls of language, and come to an understanding with her child that may seem to her almost marvelous.

Many of the unreasonable requisitions of parents arise through a misapprehension between adult and child about language. I heard my grandfather — a wise lawyer — say many years ago, that most of the cases that came into his hands had their origin in some misunderstanding about "terms of speech." He observed that if once persons could come to a complete understanding as to the meaning of the words they employed most disputes could be avoided. If it is difficult for adults to understand one another, is it not much harder for a child to get the meaning of words that come crowding upon him before he

has had the experience to discern that there are shades of meaning between every two? Children who are ambitious of shining as talkers have funny little experiences. I recollect that I heard a pedantical little comrade use a word that struck me as vastly fine —"repeat," when I was about seven years old, and I sought a fitting occasion to bring it in. So, on trying to state that something I knew was too momentous to be put into words, I observed that I could not "repeat" it. The other girl looked at me with a superior air and commented drily, "You mean you can't *express* it, don't you?" And I was struck dumb with admiration, nor ventured to try another original phrase on her for many a long day. How many years ago that was, and it seems like only yesterday! Such indelible impressions do these apparently trivial incidents make on the child mind.

Parents can aid their children materially, not only by using good English before them but by occasionally dropping in their presence a hint about some general grammatical rule so simple that they can themselves apply it. What difference does it make where we get our knowledge, so we get it? Let

the rule come out of a story, if possible; it will make the deeper impression. It was from the habit of "browsing in a library" which Oliver Wendell Holmes said was the best of all kinds of education, that I gleaned many a bit of grammatical lore which no one could have forcibly instilled into a dreaming head. A trivial story impressed a certain fact that text-books might have preached in vain, about affirmatives and negatives. A poem of Moore told me other things more distinctly than Lindley Murray ever did. A mother who takes the pains to clinch a fact with a tale need never repeat her argument. It is easy in this way to make grammar take root in a child's mind without the use of a text-book, and a wonderful saving of time may be accomplished in school education.

I have seen this ideal carried out in families where conscientious care is bestowed on the nursery. Mites of three converse as fluently and with as faultless a use of the mother tongue as their seniors by many years. One six-year-old boy expresses philosophical ideas in excellent language. "Prigs?" By no means. Natural, simple, shy children, entirely unconscious of their own superiority; knowing no better

than to practise daily the culture belonging of right to their condition.

We owe it to our children to give them the best we have or can achieve at all times. When the tot with head scarce reaching to our knee asks anxiously, "Is that right? *Why* isn't that right?" we ought to answer as truly as if we were on the witness stand in court. Every fairly educated woman ought to be able to train her children in the correct use of the mother tongue. It is merely a question of inclination on her part. The miserable excuse for not making the effort is usually that children "will learn all that after awhile in school." I wish to make it clear that they will never learn grammar so well in school and after six years as they can learn it at home before six.

If the Socratic method, the verbal method of imparting learning, is of any value anywhere, it is of value in teaching languages. Especially in teaching the mother tongue. We need not be forever drilling a child and it is not even necessary to be eternally thinking about instructing him. Example is a great deal. And judgment helps. We should realize that some idiosyncrasies are native to childhood. It is an

infantile tendency to make all verbs regular and to invent adjectives. The three-year-old often says "rolly" for slippery; "fally" for unsafe, etc. These inventions ought to be treated indulgently, for they will speedily be out-grown. It is more important to help a child to extend his vocabulary by using new terms in his presence, in a way he can comprehend.

There is an immense difference between children in the number of words they employ at the same age. Some possess about fifteen hundred words at three years, others less, and others again, two thousand. It is desirable for them to get early as large a vocabulary as possible, but this will regulate itself. By the time he is four an intelligent child ought to be able to express most that he thinks and feels without much difficulty. And if he has been well taught he will not have the slightest trouble in transferring his fluency to paper as soon as he learns to write. Grammar and composition and even the elements of rhetoric will have been insensibly acquired during the first six or eight years and the best possible start made toward a good education. Picture books with verses are very helpful, but the mother should

choose those that are well written; that is, by authors who know how to write English. One idea clearly expressed is worth twenty that are put forth in an involved, obscure style.

CHAPTER VI

Cultivating Observation

"Qualities are not inherent in objects; they are what we have experienced about these objects. Hence, the different ways people have of seeing things."— McLellan.

DID you ever hunt a needle in a haystack? Did you ever go to a world's fair with an immense crowd about you and try to pick out the masterpiece in the Italian gallery of paintings and the choicest bit of ivory carving in the Swiss rooms? Or did you ever try to find a friend on Broadway, who had promised to meet you about three in the afternoon, somewhere between Thirty-fourth and Forty-second streets! Then you know what it is to be bewildered and made cross by a whirling succession of impressions and a mass of indistinguishable objects all hurtling against your eyes and ears until you are weary of the world.

So the big world seems to a little, little child,

tagging after its parents, trying to find something small enough to get hold of and understand. So he becomes weary and discouraged in the endeavor to pick out single impressions from those that are thronging on his senses. And how much he needs the aid of his parents' experience; how absolutely he is at the mercy of their candor and sympathy, and fainting for their practical advice! How rarely is his need understood and ministered to! There is scarcely a day that I am not made impatient with the abstraction of mothers who take their children abroad for recreation. Their bored air and listless replies depress youthful spirits and discourage conversation. They perform unwillingly a disagreeable duty, not realizing that while they are exercising the bodies of their charges they are helping to stultify their minds. By refusing to give intelligent replies to the eager, interested questions of the little creatures they are simply throwing the children back upon themselves in a way to confuse their faculties beyond recall.

Yet apart from the value of a mother's explanations to her little one I believe that any one who tries the plan can get real pleasure from watching and

helping on the pretty play of childish observations and ideas. We get richly repaid for our slight trouble in the possession of intelligent, well-informed children whose susceptibility to new impressions is keen yet sane, without that unfortunate nervousness that too often shows itself where a shy nature has to recover from rebuffs and overcome too many unpleasant obstacles in the satisfaction of its legitimate curiosity.

Every miscomprehension on the part of an elder is a rebuff, and these are deplorably frequent. We are so kind about drawing to the surface the latent virtues and talents of our friends, and so indifferent to the true meaning of our children's stammering explanations! Do we seriously question ourselves as to the *validity* of the impressions our children have gained from us about those numerous matters they have laid before us, trusting our oracular judgment? Have we been careful, deliberate and definite in responding to appeals and equally prudent in excluding from their eyes and ears things likely to hurt their mobile minds? Nothing is more certain than that the child who is not guarded from evil and supplied with mental food which is whole-

some and agreeable will find out for himself some sort of nutriment to feed his insatiate hunger for new impressions. The less he digests the more he seeks, like a dyspeptic who swallows masses of food and assimilates nothing. The child who wearies quickly of everything, who longs for excitement constantly renewed, who glances at this and that and cares for nothing,— this is the child who has not been trained to observe anything well, whose eyes wander, whose ears are dull, whose faculties are not awakened to the details of any phase of life, but who simply thinks of everything as a great moving picture show, which he can look at without making any effort to comprehend.

The first feeling that lifts a human being above the level of the brutes is wonder. Animals are capable of astonishment only; not of awe and admiration. The higher we go in the scale of humanity the more completely developed we find a feeling which is the beginning of religious and moral ideas, as it is the life of the intellect. Dull and ignorant people have a little of it but in a passive way. They see a thing which is out of the range of their experience, and they recognize, with something

like envious surprise, that it is above their comprehension. In those southern countries where railroads are still unfamiliar the young darkies will sometimes stand for hours, gazing with vague, dumb astonishment at a steam threshing machine, affrighted at its noisy whistle, and ready to flee at the first sign of malignity on the part of the supposed demon. Their wonder is a poor, meager sentiment. They stand like animals, simply stultified.

But with what tremors a child of cultured parents views new machines! Here is something to investigate, to trace to its source. He is charmed at finding something not quite simple and which he must labor to understand. The working of the shining wheels and pistons, the dilating, life-like action of the splendid thing enchains his imagination and he could study it forever. It is disappointing to be allowed only a superficial view of what is so full of delightful mystery; to be torn away with his curiosity only half satisfied, and cut off with a perfunctory history of the wonder that has attracted all his admiration. I think the best person to show a child the machinery hall in a museum is a youthful grandfather. He is able to re-live his childish sensations

and sympathize with the excitement a child feels at sight of wondrous novelties as a jaded father or mother cannot! And then, the grandfather has plenty of time; parents only a limited amount. It must be admitted that to satisfy a child time is necessary.

The manner in which a child views a great, magnificent piece of machinery in action indicates the measure of his general intelligence. The dull child will exhibit merely fright; the born mechanician or the originating, progressive mind is filled with admiration, and feels itself stimulated to emulation, inspired to new flights. Such a child goes home filled with the desire to undertake enterprises of his own; he too, wants to propel boats, drive the great factory wheel, manage the engine, and put in operation that force which seems to him the embodiment of all poetry. In a word, he would become a navigator, an engineer, just as earlier, attracted through lower appetites, he longed to keep a candy shop or sell soda water.

It is customary to take no account of these fleeting and shallow desires which children from time to time betray to us; but trivial as they seem they may

influence their whole lives. There is no possibility of estimating the effect of a single impression upon the mind of a mere infant. Memory treasures up the most absurd incidents in our past life and neglects to register events that we consider of supreme importance. Nor do we know why. We cannot in any way determine what particular impression is to become permanent or what one will fade away. Recalling our past, we are often vexed to find some trifling incident recur again and again, that we would fain put away, while about the great and stirring occurrence which we are eager to recollect in detail we have the vaguest idea. And it is the little things that return often that influence us most and finally come to have a strong hold on our natures. The ridiculous experiences of which a child's memory is built up! I remember now with mortification, that for many years a queer old superstition about poison being located in the first finger of the left hand brought me to the habit of avoiding the use of that finger. I would not touch my face with it, because a garrulous neighbor who was in the way of being a favorite with me, once said emphatically —" All the poison in your body is in that first finger!" I told

nobody about it but believed the story and recollected it. It is strange but true that the trifling likings and dislikes of our childhood grow into the tastes and prejudices of maturity. Consequently, what a child thinks and prefers is important. He is the master of his own fate, through the very infantile preferences of which we so seldom take account.

Children often seemed to be whirled about like leaves in a high wind, silly in their changeableness. They want one thing to-day and something else to-morrow and there appears to be no reason to suppose that one of their aims or ambitions is of more consequence than another. Nevertheless, there is some little betrayal of character through these flippancies. A certain note sounds once and again as a single strain of melody creeps through the bewildering crash of Wagner's music. Happy that mother who is gifted with such insight that she can follow this slender thread of personality through the inconsistencies of her child's ideas! There is always a key-note, a persistent fancy or taste, and if that is wisely laid hold of it becomes the guide to a perfect education of his faculties. The persistent taste will

inevitably give the cast to character, and the stronger it is the more valuable will be the character.

The strongest impression of all our lives makes or mars us. What brutal men have grown up through a hatred contracted in tender years! What heroes have developed out of a reward wisely bestowed, what numbers of men and women can look back to some episode in their earlier years that changed the current of all their lives for the better or the worse! A book I am fond of re-reading is one of Cherbuliez' volumes, "Jean Teterolle." There a boy is thrashed unjustly by a baron who employs him to trim his trees, and goes out into the world with the one idea of some day returning to that estate and buying it for himself, and so lording it over the man who has insulted him. And by toiling early and late, by making use of every chance to rise and accumulate money, he does fulfil his vow; and lives to buy in the mortgaged estate and triumph over the baron's son. Jean is not an ill character, but so rugged and rough that the effect of that injustice so deeply felt, is manifest through all his after career. A single blow from a baron's stick changed an entire life. And it is true to nature. People seldom choose their careers

in accordance with their natural abilities; they are swept into the current of circumstances by some fortuitous event. But those who do choose, who pursue the careers they are best fitted for have that happiness which is better than riches; the joy of work in the occupations they love.

Wise guardians who have power over circumstances as well as sagacity, continually open up to children fresh sources of knowledge, so that after becoming acquainted with many different kinds of action they may be sure of finding what makes a genuine appeal to their natures. It is unfortunate when a definite, decisive choice about a career is made prematurely. For the taste sticks. Children readily become narrow in their views. They form attachments on slight grounds, and the fewer attachments one has the more bigoted he grows.

I would expand the child's mind by showing him from time to time scenes from all sides of life. Take him to-day to studios and let him see how pictures are made; next week to silk factories, to learn the poetry of labor, and afterward to a brick-yard and iron foundry, not forgetting the claims of churches and great monuments upon an elevating education,

The alternation of country and town life is a delightful stimulant, and each season has its appropriate lesson. Actual experience is worth a world of book lore. It is not particularly interesting to a child to read in his history that he should be grateful to all those who supply him with the comforts of his daily life; to the farmer, the baker, the manufacturer, the builder. But when he sees how grain grows and is converted into flour, how furniture is wrought from blocks of wood, and threads woven into cloth, the whole history of the objects about him is revealed. The different parts of life become connected and he gets a sense of the thread of harmony that runs through all. We debate about how early a child's education should begin; whether telling him the truth about flowers and stones and the stars is not "crowding his mind" at the age of three or four. But the time to make the earth interesting to him is that instant, be it early or later, that he begins to find the earth interesting. My little girl, at four, began to show the liveliest interest in the sky, and besought her father to talk about it with her. As he was an accomplished astronomer, he told her some simple little tales that stimulated her curiosity so much that each

night, as soon as the darkness settled down, she would run for her little coat and hat and beseech him to take her up to the roof to "study the stars." Such a happy occupation could not possibly militate against the health of any child; what the little one is so drawn toward is an indication that the study should be entered upon; even at the most tender age.

There is not half so much danger as we apprehend that we will make our offspring too clever! So long as the little one seeks knowledge he is in a safe way. It is when he believes himself competent to impart it that we may begin to be uneasy! And the best way to keep our ambitious modern children level-headed is to permit them early — very early — the companionship of cultivated persons whom they must recognize as their superiors. American parents are among the best in the world in some respects. But in respect to surrounding their children from the very first with elevating influences, they might take a hint from Philip, King of Macedon, who said to the wise Aristotle, "I wish my son to be saved from making the mistakes I have made, and committing the follies I have committed."

In every child is the germ of every talent, every

power. Why do some develop genius, others mania, and others grow to be normal beings? Are there other influences to be reckoned with, beside heredity and education? There must be reasons for the variations from the average that constantly take place, and also, for the peculiarities persons exhibit unwillingly and unconsciously. All of us are moved at times to acts we had not contemplated, and do things out of our plans because we "cannot help it." What governs us?

There is a fate in habit; not only in our own habits, from which we depart daily, but in the habits of our forefathers. Without knowing why, we are constantly reverting to some way of doing things that an ancestor practised; and so the pendulum of progress swings backward again, and the world only seems to go forward in the whirl of living. It is a peculiar thing that although the intellect advances, that part of us that governs tastes and preferences changes very little. People of advanced ideas sometimes have the most primitive tastes. The most intellectual man is drawn to an unlettered companion; the most highly cultured woman likes to "steal awhile away" from all her up-lifting pursuits and become

a barbarian again, on a camping-out tour in the hills. But if we take the pains to trace out the *why* of these eccentric longings for the simpler life, we may often find their source in some early influence. If there is a fate in inheritance there is, also, a fate in the surroundings of our childhood — in climate, the views near home, all the sights and sounds that nourished our senses in infancy. And especially do the recollections of people who were pleasant to us in those old days govern our sympathies. This woman is liked because she reminds us of our first heroine; the person whom we looked up to with infantile awe. This man seems familiar and agreeable, for we knew his prototype when we had not achieved a dozen years, and built ourselves upon the model of his attractions. The things we were habituated to in early childhood all aid in forming our tastes. We rarely rise much higher than the best suggestion made to us then. Even though other ways may afterwards be chosen, there remains at the root of the character some ineradicable preference. The old person who has lived in a foreign land very contentedly, longs to return to his native land to die. The world-worn man who has achieved success, feels some day the over-mastering

impulse to go "back to the old home" and be surrounded once more with all the simple things he loved as a boy. Do our early preferences then, ever pass away?

I believe that what is called individuality comes about largely through the action of environment upon natural susceptibilities. There is a force in circumstances that nobody can resist; it exerts an influence along the line of least resistance in the character. No one is absolutely callous to his surroundings, but sensitive natures are wonderfully under their influence. Let us not say that the shrinkings or preferences of young children are causeless whimsies. It is a certain indication of a strong, positive nature when a taste that has been persistently discouraged to-day crops out again to-morrow. Observe and respect such manifestations in a child.

A mother should distinguish between *fear* and *aversion* in her child. The one may be simply momentary fright, and be reasoned away; but the other proceeds from some innate distaste that it may not be wise to attempt to conquer. Sensitiveness to impressions is a talent; do not try to dull susceptibilities that may be a splendid educative force. The

capacity to take a great deal of pleasure from a beautiful environment, or be annoyed by some ugly feature of the landscape shows that the nature is artistic. There is a morality in landscapes that may awaken in us dispositions toward evil or good. Hawthorne, himself the most susceptible of mortals, bore testimony to the shaping hand of destiny through environment in his story of "The Great Stone Face." Ideal as it is, the incident is not impossible. We grow to resemble even outwardly, what we love; and alas! by some terrible fascination we come to resemble what we hate if we are forced into daily contact with it. Through the very antagonism it excites in us unlovely feelings are aroused.

The preferences and prejudices of childhood are strong and intense because the young person is more emotional than intellectual. His tastes grow out of his loves and hates; not out of deliberate choice of what is good over what is evil. And his early tastes are to govern him all his life.

Now, how is it possible to guide our child wisely, toward what is estimable, and away from that which makes for ill? I think there is but one way: to educate him in the faculty of discrimination. If we

continually choose for a child what he is to like and what he is to do, he becomes a mere tool in our hands, his natural inclinations covered and all the power in him for good or ill merely dormant, to break forth unexpectedly, perhaps to his undoing, when he is thrown on his own resources.

But the child who is trained early in life *to see things as they are* becomes "as a god, knowing good and evil." The capacity to *see* was considered by Ruskin as the most important faculty there is. And he also pronounced it the rarest. Most people go through the world in entire disregard of details; they "did not notice" what they passed by, because their senses were heedless. They are incapable of forming a judgment of certain events because they gained only a cursory view of its most prominent features. If they travel they look at rivers and mountains without curiosity and admire or deprecate by rote, following their guide-book. Half the beauties of the world are a closed book to them because the capacity of appreciation has never been developed, and they remain to the end of their days like children whose eyes and ears are defective.

Nothing more clearly shows a trained mind than

the ability to make a swift, unerring choice of valuable things out of a mass of worthless ones. But it is a capacity demanding long and earnest cultivation before it reaches perfection. The training of it must be begun very early; even in infancy. Since all living is merely an instinctive repetition of a once learned act of estimating values, the earlier the power to make such an estimation can be established the sooner the person will be of use to himself. "I guess you'll never buy wooden nutmegs," contentedly said a proud grandfather to a little girl whose nice instinct had decided that a certain young man was not a gentleman. "That child will make a lawyer some day," observed a judge of a small boy who saw through some artful tangle of words that had been strung out to puzzle him. Shrewdness in the young always tickles the fancy of guardians, and they praise the wit of children who are not to be beguiled. But how merciless they are toward those not so happily gifted by nature! Yet with some pains almost all children could become quick of perception. They must be taught to *observe details,* and not pass by everything with a superficial look.

"Which one of us will see the larger number of

different things on this walk?" the wise mother will ask, on starting out on the country ramble. And the child thus stimulated will in all probability soon become expert enough to rival herself in his descriptions. Merely answering questions, without leading up to a knowledge of the whys and wherefores, is of little use. All questions should receive consideration, but many of them may be dismissed with a word, while others require exhaustive analysis. A very good plan is to stimulate the child with some little reward to accumulate as many facts as he can about what he happens to be interested in at the time. Let his aroused curiosity be the guide for the exercise. It matters little what the thing is he studies, so he studies it thoroughly. Of all things thoroughness is the one most important. Montaigne believed that the object of education was to fill a boy or girl "with an honest curiosity for information about everything." We are at last coming to understand that any kind of knowledge that the child cares nothing about and that he acquires against his will is of comparatively small profit to him. The great success in teaching is to stimulate in the pupil a wish to learn.

CHAPTER VII

Imagination Plays

"There is abundant evidence that the visualizing faculty admits of being largely developed by education."— Galton.

THE remark quoted above is to be received with a good deal of qualification. The best education that can be afforded the faculty of constructing mental images,— and upon this faculty depends much more of our practical power than is generally known — is that of self-training. There is danger of a teacher meddling too much rather than giving too little help in this direction. In the earlier years a child should be left a great deal to his own untrammeled efforts in the way of building up out of his memories certain new combinations that take the form with him of fanciful plays. Having been taught to observe closely, and to recall easily the details of what he has seen, he may be left alone, in great measure, to work out those ideas which are

insistent and stimulating in the healthy young mind. A kindergarten training is an excellent beginning for the after home education, especially as it accustoms the child very early to ideas of community life. But when he is withdrawn from kindergarten and the mother seriously takes his home education in her own hands, she may safely leave him alone to ponder over the things he has learned about plays with his kindergarten teacher, and watch how he reconstructs, out of old material, new pastimes that mean important things to him.

It has been ascertained that language is not necessary to thinking; that much of our thinking goes on without the aid of words, the brain acting sub-consciously, using some material less concrete than language as we know it. A kind of language there must be, but we do not yet know in what it consists. The little child reasons, imagines, and even argues with himself, in a sort of dumb show, before he has acquired a vocabulary. His acts indicate that certain mental processes have preceded them that he would be puzzled to explain. When long chains of thinking are carried on doubtless words are necessary. I recollect a period in my childhood when I always whispered to

myself a correlating narrative with what I was doing. The sound of the words in my own ear seemed to be an essential to the pleasure of the actions being carried on. The little dramatic plays enacted with paper dolls thus had a kind of vocal accompaniment that made the plays much more real to me. But observation of other children has led me to suppose that few children converse with themselves during their actual playing. The mere acting out of their fancies is sufficient. People differ a good deal in respect to attachment to words; some being able to act even in important things, in a kind of dumb show, while those who possess natural fluency feel a running commentary in their minds about what they see and participate in. But every normally constituted child is capable of some sort of constructive activity in the way of making up plays; and in this manner he gets a valuable kind of self-training.

An active, healthy imagination is one of the happiest gifts a child can possess. If we watch an intelligent child of four or five years, who believes himself unnoticed, we will probably be astonished at the richness and fertility of fancy which can give life and color to dull, commonplace things, and weave whole

stories and dramas around the simple toy that means nothing more to us than what it plainly stands for. But we will perceive that even his wildest romances found themselves upon facts, for free and frolicsome as imagination may appear it is subject to its laws. It deals with real things in a playful way; it embroiders, paints, molds, but it must have its materials; its basis is actual life. What we call creative ability is really nothing but the power to reconstruct, perhaps to connect several plans or patterns into a whole which seems different from the original.

The child is an irresponsible artist who daubs on his color boldly, without much sense of the absurdities he commits, and so he often produces effects that surprise others as well as himself. Many of the acts that seem so precocious because we suppose them to be the outcome of a well-considered plan are really happy accidents; not devoid of the merit of originality, but neither to be over-praised as works of genius. Childhood is one unbroken series of experimentings, and if significant results are frequent it is because so many different things are attempted. The child who is so fortunate as to be left to Nature for the first dozen years of his life, and not forced out

of his normal development by wrong training, while getting such education as he puts forth voluntary efforts for, has the best chance of acquiring richness of fancy and power of accurate visualization. His ideas are not then distorted by the endeavor to make them conform to standards that are often artificial. If he has at hand a cultured friend to answer his questions and opportunities to gain every sort of knowledge he needs from actual experience his development will probably be so far in advance of that of ordinary children that he will pass for a genius among them. The majority of children are made dull, especially in respect to the higher faculties, by the zeal of their educators.

Over-training and undue restraints cripple the natural grace of the imagination, although, on the other hand, proper education aids its development. The very best is a wide experience. The little one who has the felicity to associate with people of broad culture, who is taken about, on proper occasions, and hears and sees many new things, becomes enriched and self-confident, while the children of the very poor, who know almost no variety in a squalid existence,

must use over and over again in their plays, the limited knowledge belonging to them.

The mental limitations of the average school child are not sufficiently considered. The other day I happened to pass a recreation ground belonging to a large public school, where a troup of kindergarten children were going through a game that should be accompanied by music. The circle consisted of children far above the average in looks, evidently belonging to the class that has the privileges of opportunity. But the listlessness, the dulness and lack of interest apparent through the little circle showed the perfunctory nature of this educative game; the teacher herself looked bored to extinction, and not a single child showed any of the liveliness that one would suppose natural to the occasion. It was merely a *drill;* as are most of such exercises in public schools; and must have left the effect of penalty rather than of pleasure on the participants in it. Systematized plays have this disadvantage; that they require unusual tact, experience and originality in the leader or teacher. It is far better for the child to be left free to work out its instinctive ideas of frolic unaided than that he

should be fettered in the free exercise of his fancy by the obligation of drill. If these plays have a subtle meaning, if they are really *work* then why not call them work? A natural child is not averse to work; I think that honest effort is by no means repugnant to him, but he does resent being beguiled into calling work play, and having his amusements made so tame that they might as well be left out, for all the pleasure he takes in them.

It is instructive to observe the difference between the child who has been gently trained and the one who has been over-restrained in plays with dolls. The one is all tenderness and solicitude, the other harsh and hard in her imaginary maternity. She knocks her senseless infant about in a way that bodes ill for her future real offspring, since the little girl is mother to the woman, and the spontaneous acts of childhood forecast what independent life will become.

Yet poverty and wealth are of themselves powerless to curb the imaginative faculties. One may be surrounded by the most beautiful objects and have everything to gratify the taste and fancy, yet remain unbenefited by these means of education. Many children being reared in luxurious homes are listless

and indifferent instead of being bright and interested in their surroundings, because the one vital spark essential to the quickening of their whole natures is denied them. They have no companion who is capable of uplifting them. Their intimate companions are ignorant nurses, who deal in suppression instead of suggestion. No wonder that the dear little child seated in the corner of its beautiful nursery, with this censor and hard critic of the ideal ever present, feels no inspiration to create a wonder-working world out of its abundant material. If the divine fire kindles in its heart it shyly stifles betraying signs, and whispers to itself the fancies and ideas that would inevitably be ridiculed if revealed.

Happy that little one who, even with a poor home, has a sympathetic, companionable mother; who is patient with his whimsies, and helpful in carrying out the perpetual little plans and wishes that are suggested to him by his observation of what is going on about him.

In everything concerning the welfare of the child we must go back to the mother. She not only endows the child with her own emotional nature but she makes the home atmosphere in which what is best in him

will wither or come to perfection. With the right home atmosphere and a loving mother the natural attitude of the child is that of spontaneous, continual activity, mental as well as physical. His mind receives and stores up an incredible number of impressions every day, and as he lives out in his plays what he perceives, his education is gained as rapidly as unconsciously, upon the firm and rational basis of experimenting.

Now the direction of his experimentings will proceed from the kind of life led about him. If his parents happen to be interested in commercial pursuits and a boy hears frequent talk about "stock markets," banks, or marketable goods, in all probability his plays will take the trend toward commerce. He will "play store" and learn to calculate and bargain. Thoughts about merchandize are his counters and he makes up games to suit. This is not saying that his tastes will ultimately be colored by his childish plays, but merely that his self-training will be so colored. From too much familiarity he may even weary of what engrosses him so early, yet some residuum may remain to influence him in some way, in maturity. The artist's child takes as naturally to the tracing of his

fancies on paper as the acrobat's offspring to originating new modes of tumbling; the little one who has been taken often to the theater goes off privately to rehearse some imaginary drama that has been ingeniously designed from bits of remembered scenes.

Once I discovered a child of a friend with whom I was stopping, sobbing and going on in a sort of happy hysterical frenzy, all by herself in the attic. Tactfully questioned she confessed to carrying on there a sort of emotional performance, pieced out from her little experiences at shows, and once embarked she eagerly went through for my benefit a miniature tragedy that was not without interest and climax. Talent for acting had shown itself in several members of this family, and the child in question went through in her 'teens, that craze for the stage which attacks many bright and versatile girls. However, she outlived it and became a most practical housewife after an early marriage.

In the household of an editorial friend a tot of four was found privately accumulating stacks of paper and big envelopes, which she frankly stated were "manusc'its" she was going to take to a publisher. "I'm going to write a book and sell it and then write an-

other book, and the publisher will say,— Mis' Ketcham, we want as many books as you can write, — and I'll write him a lib'ry full of them!" It may not be amiss to say that this little one also, outgrew the spell of propinquity, and took to other occupations when she grew up.

The delicate tyranny of the higher faculties is, however, as nothing in comparison with the craving of deprived bodily functions. The child of poor parents who is necessarily stinted in luxuries, is impelled to enjoy in plays the fleshly delights he sees from afar and envies. Nothing charms a meager little child whose daily food is of the commonest quality, than to depict to herself, as well as she can, a splendid mansion where servants constantly minister to the palate. Barmecide feasts they are, that make the poor infant's mouth water and her starved appetite to grow beyond bounds. But for the time being her visions take her out of the suffering present into a fairy-land of pleasure. It is the best thing she knows.

Dickens, the child-lover, never showed a more acute knowledge of the action of the infant mind than when he told how the "marshioness" buried in her dark cellar, kept herself alive by "making believe." The

delicious punch made from bits of orange peel comforted a soul that longed for luxuries as well as a thirsty body that must drink even wash to keep itself from painful sensations. Sometimes the sole alleviation to unpleasant circumstances, when he is misunderstood and under-rated, is a little one's power to imagine himself in happier surroundings. A too active imagination is not always a desirable faculty; but the best off-set to it is the cheerful companionship of nice children. An introspective little one would best not be left too much alone. But we must remember that sensitiveness goes with imagination and that a child ought not to be laughed at nor be subjected to the society of those who will be rough with his fancies and "make-believes." What are adult ambitions but an extension of these "make-believes" of childhood!

If the child is to get all the benefits that come from an unfettered use of the imagination grown people must refrain from teaching him too early. Refrain that is, from imposing upon him their own cut-and-dried formulas. Their part is merely to suggest, his own to carry out.

Suggestions are indispensable. They are the

torches that light up his path, the stones from which he constructs his temple. Suggestions may be conveyed in song, in conversation, in story; but they are most effectually conveyed in example. The little one who lives with his parents and sees mingled with their daily commonplace acts something of higher thought and feeling, will quickly seize that invisible charm and become imbued with its spirit. Even in his most trifling acts you will find larger motives than ever stir the child whose moral nature is only subject to the development of an intentional discipline. When he builds houses or cars or ships they will not be only for himself, but for those he loves; his pleasure will consist to some extent in doing things for others.

I know this from personal experience. I have seen in one family a tot of three years who is perpetually engaged in some occupation that involves the happiness of her entire family. She is by no means spirituelle, but a healthy, happy, romping little creature whose experiments with things might be called "mischief" by uncomprehending people. Yet they mean much to her, and her friends, who love her well, and watch her with interest, tread softly amongst the astonishing disorder she makes, lest they should over-

turn some arrangement that is beautiful and harmonious in her eyes. As she is perfectly unrestrained and confidential with every one, she explains her plans and acts as she goes on. This pile of dominoes that obstruct the doorway is a cake she is "baking for papa"; this piece of paper on a chair is a pattern by which she intends to cut mamma a dress; and the books surrounding her piano turn into a horse and carriage, in which she is about to take the entire family for a drive!

It is unusual for games which come strictly under the head of "imagination plays" to be engaged in before a child is four or five years of age. But in families where children are the frequent companions of grown people their strong propensity for imitation will often lead to an earlier ripening of their dramatic powers. Nor is it undesirable that this should be so. Play is the natural outlet for a child's thoughts, and dramatic plays are the earliest development of a man's natural ideas. To restrain these movements is to drive back the child's living fancies into the recesses of his mind, and bring about confusion and unhappiness. Some children who are forced to be still and passive when they are longing

to have relief in action, find outlet in whispering over stories to themselves; but it is an unsatisfactory substitute for dramatic action. And it is also, morally injurious, for the necessity of concealing one's ideas presently destroys the ability for fluent expression and brings about timidity and distrust of our friends.

The natural instinct of a child is to draw his family into his plays, and until he is rebuffed and thrown back upon himself he greatly prefers companionship to solitude. Development takes place in the right way when a young child thinks, talks and acts, all at the same time. It is then, highly beneficial to him to feel perfect freedom when he plays, and to go to the limit of his impulses, in order to experience the proper reaction.

In a healthy, happy child the impulse for play will come whenever play is the appropriate outlet for his energy. The ideal of life is that desire should always precede action. Among unspoiled children it does. Little is gained by urging a child "to go and play." The suggestion may relieve us of a temporary burden in the matter of entertaining him, but like all temporary reliefs it entails future trouble. If our little one leaves his toys and sidles up against his

mother in that fretful way which is so trying, he ought not to be repulsed. It means that his own small resources are exhausted, and that he needs a change of scene, a new fund of ideas or else the refreshment of rest and soothing from mother-love and patience.

Periods of dulness and depression come to us all; but they should rarely come to a child. Nature is his proper guide, and herein is the advantage of the home nursery over which a wise mother presides, over any educational institution. She will let the child choose his own plays and carry out his own little plans, aiding and advising but not interfering.

CHAPTER VIII

Nature Studies

"True wisdom is only an interpretation of nature. In nature is found all primary ideas, the principles upon which all knowledge depends, and the models for all the arts."— Marcel.

I HOPE this chapter heading does not instantly conjure up before the mother a vision of tiresome botany lessons. It is a peculiar fact that genuine love of Nature is rare among women, while there is in almost every one of them a warm and deep sentiment for the beautiful in art. Perhaps it is because their initiation into the fields of science is as yet a novel thing, and they look upon acquaintance with science, even in the simpler forms, as task-work. But Nature is simply reality; that which is about us from the first to the last moment of life, and the mind which contemplates a single fluttering leaf with an eye to its qualities approaches her inscrutable enigmas. Agassiz said modestly, that in a whole life-time of

study he had only found out one fact; that one relating to the correspondence between the succession of fishes in geological time and the different stages of their growth in the egg. This was all. But it was a mighty fact. And what a happy, fruitful life he passed! Nothing to him were all the frets of hurrying civilization, all the envyings, the emulations, the worries of man's ambitious struggle; he was withdrawn from them through an absorption in the eternal verities. And he lived to be very old.

That shrewd observer, Samuel Smiles, notes the fact that natural history studies have a peculiarly calming effect on the mind. Naturalists usually live to a great age and are remarkable for their insensibility to the ordinary tribulations and trials of life. We may deduce thence a good lesson for our children: wean them from pettiness by turning their attention to interesting natural objects. If they are scolding the rain that breaks up some plan, show them the beauty of a rain-drop, poised on a blade of grass on the plot beneath the window. If they shrink from a horned caterpillar, make them look at it closely enough to see the singular tips, the curious colors, the remarkable flexibility of its waving appendages.

If after a little scrutiny the timid child boldly takes the thing in his fingers, try to conceal your own aversion, if you have one, and be as diplomatic in your admiration as you would be with a friend who told a doubtful story at your dinner table. We all have to "smile and smile and be a villain still" when it comes to hiding natural sentiments on occasion.

I acknowledge that instinctively I have an aversion to all creeping things. My spontaneous interest in biology begins with the four-footed beast. But when it was necessary, in view of the welfare of children that I should have a lively and absorbing interest in "bugs" I cultivated one. However, at this epoch, I found it a wise policy to accept the suggestion of a broad-minded educator who said that often there is some one near at hand who knows thoroughly the subject it is now desirable for the child to learn, while even our most earnest efforts can only make us mediocre teachers in it; so we should call upon the natural teacher to help us out.

When in the course of events it became necessary to have at hand an enthusiastic naturalist to help along the education of my children, I looked about and found a young girl who possessed a genuine love

for entomology and considerable knowledge of the subject. She was engaged to come to the house several times each week and "play with grubs and things" as they termed it, while I prudently kept to my own affairs. Yet it was essential that I participate to some extent in the plays, in her absence, and a little tragedy arose from my conscientious performance of the duty. A cocoon had been imported by the young teacher, to be kept until the grub should eat his way to the light. A charming butterfly was to then appear upon the scene. I was besieged with enquiries as to the progress of this transformation, and the children showed something of the spirit of the amateur gardener who digs up his seeds to find out if they are sprouting; they must continually investigate the cocoon. Whether these zealous efforts interfered with the natural development of the grub or whether it was from some innate propensity, a pervert, I do not know; but one morning as we were looking at it the outer cuticle slowly dissolved before our eyes and an ugly, misshapen creature, of about five times the size of the gentle being we had expected, emerged and fell to the floor. "Why don't it fly? Why don't it fly?" cried the children; but the thing

only continued to drag its length along the carpet in such an ungraceful fashion that I could not help turning my eyes away. There was no doubt about it; we had a monster among us! In the end, we summoned the maid, who disposed of it by means of a dust-pan and brush, and it probably finished its career in the back yard. But the instructor on "bugs" was exceedingly disappointed next day, when the history was related to her, and contracted, I fear, a contempt for the group that could not tolerate the caprice of Nature in sending forth a departure from the ordinary course of development. Bug monsters are so rare!

But aside from the technical knowledge of entomology or botany, which is the least part of the subjects after all, there is a vast field for the mother in the way of Nature studies, and one which no one else can cultivate so well. From the very earliest time she should accustom her children to the wonderful plan of progression in all the manifestations of life. A little private study of botany will equip her with enough elementary learning to enable her to pilot her pupils through the business of analyzing simple plants, and finding out their families and their gen-

eral structure. Thence, to the subtler idea of the unfolding of family relations is but a step; but how significant a step! To be able to tell your child, simply, without any shrinking or diffidence, that the germ of the plant you are holding in your hand is an egg, fertilized by pollen, carried by an accommodating insect, and that the same principle of development holds throughout all creation, is to do away forever with the false nonsense that will probably be poured into his ears when he begins to associate with the children with whom he will go to school. That there is sex in plants, that they marry and have offspring, that all the process of such child-bearing is respectable, not only in the lower plants but in the higher species, that there is a morality in Nature higher and finer than our ignorance generally allows us to appreciate — what a splendid lesson is there.

As a means of awakening in the mother a sincere interest in the ways of plants, and of arousing genuine amusement at their singularities, I heartily recommend Grant Allen's "Story of the Plants." It is at once thoroughly scientific and delightfully dramatic, and is more entertaining for summer reading than the average summer novel. Besides being very

brief. With it as a guide I once had the gratification of inspiring in a rather dull girl of eighteen, during a summer's acquaintance, a most remarkable interest in biology. It was at least the beginning of a broader culture than she had ever been led to undertake.

Younger persons will need to have more elementary instruction, and of an oral nature altogether. Indeed, the more a mother can hide the text-book and make information come from herself at first hand, the more vivid it will be to the child. She should "get up" her facts privately, and spring them forth on her confiding little one without quotation marks. It is a justifiable bit of acting, for if ever books are unwelcome — and they often are — they are out of place as garden litter. Out in the open, with grass, flowers and trees around "Nature studies" are easy and inevitable. Every instant some new interest arises spontaneously and one has only to respond to the invitation to be entertained.

A wee maiden was taking a country walk with her father and chatting upon things as they attracted her attention, when she suddenly ended a rather long pause with the pensive comment —"Eve'thing is Nature —'cept the houses!" Which childish aphor-

ism contains the truth in a nutshell. Everything about us *is* Nature save what has been wrought by the hand of man. Yet there is a cunning art in Nature. The ant's estates, the bird's nest, the bee's cell, are scarcely less complicated or artistic than the Egyptian Pyramids or the Panama Canal. The intricate structure of that wonderful thing, the Australian pitcher plant, which eats insects and sets traps, is a marvel of art, even though a product with which the hand of man has not meddled. To trace the design in Nature is something that makes intelligent children breathless with delight. It is not necessary for us to teach them to take an interest in the natural sciences; it is there all ready for action. The bungling of the adult teacher too often destroys this instinctive attraction. The child does not want a mediator between himself and the objects that fascinate him; he wants to handle, taste, investigate, all for himself. Simple, unalienated children are as close to the great mother as the mites that cluster in her bosom or as was primitive man before he began to enjoy the luxury of houses. Turn a child loose in the fields or woods and he riots in the wealth of opportunity offered him. Every instant affords some new fact or suggestion.

Yet presently he wearies of experiments which amuse but do not enlighten. He seeks a key to mysteries and runs to his mother with questions and prayers. His need is his parent's opportunity. Happy for both if she is not unprepared to help him out.

Science offers the principles that bind facts together and discover for us the great *why* of natural wonders. If simply to know facts constituted education the country child, with free opportunity to become acquainted with the plant and animal world, would be much better versed in natural history than the city child, restricted to cabinets of curiosities and domestic pets. But usually their knowledge is of the merely utilitarian sort. They know that milk comes from the cow and eggs from the hen; that you must plant seeds in order to get vegetables; and also, something of the habits of their woodland neighbors — the birds and squirrels. But ask one of them *why* the grape-vine sends forth climbing tendrils, or the trap-door spider conceals her nest amid foliage, or of what use is the sweet, fragrant pulp surrounding the cherry or peach pit, and the chances are that to your questions you will get only a vacant stare; to the last, perhaps, the muttered reply,—" Good for us to eat."

They never think of the tree, the selfish small utilitarians! Selfish because they have merely been taught to look at everything from the point of view of its usefulness to men. Most of us were so taught before the idea became general that Nature takes as much care of her feeblest children as of her mightiest, and that she devotes all her energies to propagation, improvement in culture being merely an incident — a necessity of the great "struggle for existence."

A few general principles are better culture for the child than a multitude of unrelated facts. It is certain that the very young child is usually capable of grasping a great, all-embracing truth, if it is lucidly put before him. It is not the principle but the confusing medley of nomenclature that often surrounds it that is tiresome. I recollect studying for a very long time in my early years, a series of volumes on physics that were well written, so far as the presentation of principles went, but were over-laden with that cumbersome scientific commentary which was deemed necessary in those days, and to which the teacher paid most of her attention. To "learn by heart" many names, was learning one's lessons well, in the old time school. And many were the dullards made by that

system. It took me a long time to outgrow the distaste for natural science caused by the routine instruction of my conscientious, narrow-minded teachers. When, in the course of a voluntarily undertaken course of reading, I came across Agassiz's delightfully clear relation of the laws of biology it was as if a light shone in a dark place, and a deserted cavern was rendered habitable to thoughts.

Instead of finding children bored by the unfolding of the mysteries of life I have frequently been surprised by their insatiate thirst for knowledge when it is presented to them attractively. It is true that the world must be presented to them as a drama, where everything is alive and acting a part. But is it not so? To seeing eyes there is no stillness in Nature, no death, only everlasting change. It is a dull child who cannot be brought to comprehend this law. And in so doing he makes greater progress than if he learned the names of twenty different plants or plodded for a month over some lesson in physics about the Leyden jar.

Physics and chemistry may be left largely to the school days, unless a parent has a passion for the natural sciences. Simple experiments are agreeable di-

versions, but the labor and expense involved in home studies of this sort commonly render them impracticable. Far easier are studies about animals and minerals, and children are always interested in zoology, even when they only know it through the stupidest of books.

The old-time country circus, where the children were allowed to feed the elephants, ride the donkeys and get intimately acquainted with the monkeys and parrots were, perhaps, better schools of learning for zoology than those that have succeeded them. But "Zoos" are in nearly every city and trips to them within the reach of everybody. If the parent will take the pains to make a little preparation in advance for such an excursion, so as to be able to answer the inevitable questions about the habitats of the kangaroo and the Polar bear, and not confuse the long-haired goats and the sheep from Australia, he will find a most appreciative small audience for his lecture. He may have to protect the animals from a too lively curiosity on the part of his zealous offspring. A certain little boy who was noted for his gentleness with animals was one day discovered deliberately killing a June bug. To the remonstrance of his mother

he replied, in a cool, philosophical tone, "But, mamma, it is necessary. We have to find out about these things." To be sure. Was not his uncle a physician, with a hobby for beetles?

Unfortunately, there is no text-book ready at hand containing the elements of natural history in a form busy parents may find satisfactory for hurried consultation. Such a book is a crying need. For lack of it we may have to cull from many volumes. But in the appended bibliography there will be found the titles of the best that I have discovered in my researches, and some that are almost equal to the demands mothers naturally make. At least, they will be found very helpful, and if supplemented by real zeal and intelligence on the part of the parent, will be of the most valuable assistance in the education of the child in such an important branch of knowledge.

CHAPTER IX

Form, Size and Number

"All intellectual life upon our planet begins with geometry."— Hill.

JUST now it is the fashion to rate mathematics low. There has been so much discussion lately about the development of the child's personality in language studies that the once rigid idea that mathematics constitute the basis of all mental training has been succeeded by theories that are easier both for teacher and pupil. As usually understood and taught, arithmetic, algebra and geometry are mere exercises for the memory. Logic enters not into them. So distasteful has the very name of mathematics become that to secure toleration for the amount of instruction necessary in the primary grade the term "number lesson" has been invented. And herein through deferring to popular prejudice, an injustice has been done toward a beautiful and useful science.

For arithmetic is not the science of number, as is so often carelessly supposed, but of *valuation*. Number is merely the outward sign of the inward grace. Where the feeling — the apprehension of comparative values — is not present the glib tongue which employs itself in counting is as silly as a pendulum swinging backward and forward in a clock whose works are out of order. "Unrelated facts are not knowledge any more than the words of a dictionary are connected thoughts." But knowledge begins the instant there is a dawning sense of *comparison* between several things, with a view to their relative values.

It rarely occurs to us how barren this world would be without the constantly enjoyed pleasure of making comparisons as to the value of different things. Much of our ordinary entertainment is extracted from the habit of drawing these comparisons. We habitually say,—"How much nicer,—how much prettier,— how much finer," is this article, or toilet, or show, than some other with which we put it into opposition. And when some one differs from our opinion we doubt the justice of his standards, and possibly think that his taste or his judgment is deficient in accuracy.

I should say there really are no "unrelated facts." It is impossible to withdraw a single fact from its connections with other matters that belong to it. But the relation is not always apparent at first sight, and the tracing out of subtle associations requires considerable dexterity of reasoning.

To the child each new fact is, necessarily, separate and distinct from what has been learned before, unless we are so careful in presenting objects to him that the association will be natural. To some degree, this might be done, with respect to mathematical ideas. We may set out with the assumption that one of the earliest conceptions of the child is that of difference in size. He learns to look up at large objects, down to those that are smaller. The association with these instinctive movements establishes itself in his understanding with the respective bulks of the things looked at. When the idea of form comes to him is a matter we cannot state much about; but probably some indefinite suggestions are gained with the knowledge that certain things roll about, as his balls, while other things that are differently shaped, stand still. His first idea of differences in shape will naturally be those between square and round objects. It will

probably be some time before the less remarkable difference that exists between oblong and square things is noted. Therefore, we do not wish to make him go out of his way to observe first the matters that naturally come later on; we will not suggest to the small child the differences existing between long and square things before he has remarked the related facts of squareness as opposed to roundness.

And before this even, must come the idea of difference in bulk without any connection with shape. Consequently, to show him that one object is larger than another, the two objects presented ought to be of *similar shape.* This little item, which is important, is seldom considered. In fact, very rarely is any deliberate attempt made to educate the child in primary ideas of a mathematical nature. He is left to chance, and acquires his notions as they may come to him. And then, we wonder that mathematics are difficult and obscure to the school child. Sometimes parents teach their children "to count," believing that this starts them rightly on the path toward knowledge of arithmetic. "He can count to five, to ten," boasts some thoughtless parent, when the baby tongue has repeated the string of one, two, three. But

it is very unwise to teach the child to run over the names of numbers without associating the names with any meaning. Nor is the plan of having baby count objects, such as spools or pennies, any better. All this is artificial training, sure to disappoint our expectations in the end. Some day when baby is displaying his little accomplishment he makes sad blunders. He puts five before two; leaves out four altogether and when questioned states that three is more than six, and shows utter ignorance of any power of genuine counting. The words one, two and three mean absolutely nothing to any one until there has grown up in the mind a sense of *quantity*. When he realizes the distinction between a little of a thing and more of it, between a few objects and many of the same kind, he begins to grasp the great generalization implied in the power of measurement.

Before we can be exact about any matter we must have an approximately correct impression of it — a general idea. Suppose a barbarian, newly landed in New York, were asked for his opinion as to the superiority of cement over cobble-stones, for pavements? Having no knowledge at all of pavements, how could he compare one sort with another? But if he first

had the meaning of pavements in general explained to him, he might soon be prepared to enter into the question of their relative values. Based upon simple notions of practical worth, irrespective of vexing temptations of contracters, such an opinion would have an unique veracity.

From a general idea, obtained first, a clear, definite understanding of any situation can be deduced. Most people err in their beliefs about great questions because their particular ideas come too soon; before the ground-plan of a generalization that is correct is laid. It is absurd to attempt to be exact about anything that has not been first apprehended in a general way. Ignorant children talk in very ridiculous fashion about going to war. But the child of a soldier of the line, who has seen a single actual battle, has a conception of the meaning of war that makes his talk strikingly different in point of details. We speak sometimes of "striking facts," but we are struck by single facts because they confirm a general principle previously known. Otherwise, they would not strike us in the least.

Now, the child's mind must go through the same mental process as that of the adult, and develop the

power of reasoning after the same mode; from generals to particulars is the rule. He must get an indefinite sense of the difference between large masses and small masses, many objects and few objects, before he can comprehend that there are definite and precise degrees of value. The loose notion must come before the compact one. Intelligent children take pleasure in comparing one thing with another. They love to measure and weigh articles in miniature scales; they continually note differences between objects, and although their distinctions are always crude and sometimes absurd, they occasionally show surprising sharpness in finding points to contrast.

A practical and feasible means of teaching the small child the primary mathematical notions is to furnish him with a well made toy scale, that will balance very correctly. Then, give him a few — say, six weights,— each one doubling the value of the other, that is, the first one weighing an ounce, the second two ounces, and so on. They will all be of the same shape and so will not distract his mind from the one object in view, which is, to discover their relations in weight. Weight will soon become related to size. After he has learned the values of his six tools, an-

other half dozen, relatively heavier and larger, may be given him. With these well understood counters in possession, he can begin to play the game of judging weight values, or measuring. First, the mother may direct his attention to the fact that one weight by itself pulls down his scale so much; then, that added weights pull down so much more. By degrees, all the weights being added, the little scale is weighted to its capacity. Then, the marvel of deducting may be entered upon. First, a single weight removed enables the scale to rise slightly, another makes it still more buoyant; until finally, by rapid, pleasant experimenting, the child learns the mysteries of adding and subtracting according to values, before he has been bothered with the merely arbitrary names of a single number.

If we could only practise what we really know — that objects come in human understanding before their names; but we concern ourselves too much with teaching the pupil the outside aspect of knowledge, and far too little with the natural, inner meaning of it. The faculty of discerning differences is closely allied to what is called the mathematical faculty, yet few people appreciate this. How many parents will ap-

plaud the child who shows readiness to repeat numbers, and frowns down the "nonsense" of curiosity as to relative weights and sizes. The old-fashioned idea that "doing sums" as country children say, is mathematical education, still prevails among us. We can scarcely get ourselves to believe that a child might become firmly grounded in the principles of arithmetic and geometry by merely being helped to interpret his surroundings correctly, even if he never handled a slate or saw a pencil. But it is, nevertheless, true. We speak of a thing being done with "mathematical exactness" when there is no fault in its proportions. Whenever a child is trained to notice the admirable proportions of a symmetrical building he is being educated in mathematics. When he is required to point out faulty measurements, to observe that one side of a thing is smaller than the other, that lengths are unequal, that an object that should be completely round has become flattened on one side,— all these points make for his accuracy and help him in the power of calculation.

The two essentials to mathematical exercises are abstraction and generalization. First the thing is examined as a general object, and afterwards it is ex-

amined in its relation to other objects more or less like itself. The child notices a particular chair in the room; then he observes other chairs, differing from the first in certain details, but still, enough like it to be classed with the order. In concentrating his attention on a single chair among several, he has unconsciously performed the act of abstraction, and in grouping several together again because of their resemblance, he generalizes.

At first all his inferences are vague and meaningless. He is blindly obeying a natural instinct in noting his surroundings. So long as he has no use for the objects he sees they are as unrelated to himself as are the sun and moon. But the instant a purpose connected with them comes into his head they assume definite shape and value. Say that he wants to build a train with the chairs. This chair shall be the locomotive — no, it is too small; this other is larger. It is *too* large. But this other one is just large enough. Perhaps he asks mother if she will please move to some other one and let him have that chair to play with. "What a silly child," perhaps she returns, and chides him for being inconsiderate. The inventor always is

inconsiderate. Pallisy burned up the furniture to keep his fires going. Small John might be required to bring mother another comfortable chair from some place, since she is requested to resign the one she occupies. But if I were that mother I should investigate all the circumstances before I saw in the seemingly rude demand a matter for family discipline. The *way* in which a thing is done should count more in such cases than the thing itself. Even the child — if he has a well ordered plan in mind, deserves to have it considered, since we permit trees to be destroyed by builders of apartment houses. It takes ten years to grow a shade tree, and but a minute for mother to change from one chair to another; *provided* little John positively cannot find another chair with exactly the proportions he requires for his locomotive. But have him look well first.

How the child's senses become sharpened as he needs to measure things with a view to their usefulness to his own plans! As Professor McLellan justly observes, the child and the savage get their first ideas of quantity and value when they come to construct something out of sticks and stones. All building in-

volves measuring, and it is through measuring that the idea of numbers is obtained. Which brings us to our point.

Form and size, as mathematical ideas, should always precede number. Geometry naturally comes before arithmetic. Do not let us be satisfied with merely stating this point; let us insist upon it. I recollect that when I heard Robert Ingersoll lecture once, he observed, whenever he reached a doubtful point in his discourse, "I'll not only prove this point; I'll demonstrate it." And then he related some little anecdote that fixed it in his hearers' minds. The only anecdote that occurs to me in the connection of a child's apprehending size with an ease that appears almost instinctive, is this: A certain tot of three years, whose mother is quite slim and not tall, was sitting in the lap of the colored cook, an enormous personage weighing about two hundred pounds, when the mother called her little daughter to her. "No, mamma come *here,*" was the answer. Coming to the kitchen door, the mother looked reproachfully at her offspring, and said, "Little things come to big things."

"Mamma's a little thing," roguishly responded the

tot, cuddling against the ample bosom of the cook; "mamma come to — Yiza!"

There is no doubt that if left to itself the child begins to measure everything quite naturally, thus training his judgment long before any idea of number takes hold of his mind. Yet, for years I have vainly sought the primary school where this principle, now acknowledged in theory, is carried out in practise. However enlightened the teacher may be she has to satisfy the parents. And parents think their children are playing when they are handling blocks shaped into geometrical forms and that they are working when they "do sums" with numbers written out on the blackboard.

But the necessity for building a shelter for himself from the beasts and from cold made man a reasonable, thinking being. Architecture is the father of all the sciences, and *building* with materials shaped and measured for the purpose is the operation that calls into play both our primitive instincts and our trained artistic perceptions. The little child is therefore, getting his best education when he is naturally and unconsciously constructing houses out of blocks. With a box containing numerous blocks, all shapes

and sizes, and having near by a patient, intelligent parent to throw in a casual word of explanation from time to time, the child may familiarize himself with the great principles of science, and with those abstract terms which to many persons remain dread symbols of mysterious quantities to the end of their lives. Accustomed to hearing his blocks spoken of as cubes, spheres, cylinders, triangles, squares, oblongs and circles, these terms greet his ear as naturally as doll and breakfast. I recollect with what awe I heard a school mate, whose father was an astronomer of great renown on two continents, casually mention such frightful things as isosceles triangles. She was not even afraid of quaternions. As I saw her from day to day, going along the prosaic streets, her head slightly drooping, as one buried in thought, I reflected what a privilege was hers, in dwelling in a learned atmosphere!

Scientific formulas are like ghosts — awful from a distance but harmless when investigated. The child who learns in the security of his home the nature of figures and the meaning of form may go to school bravely and defy the pedagogical rule which keeps pupils laboring upon three until it is thoroughly

understood and then proceed to five; by no means permitting any thought of ten until seven is mastered, and so on through all the limitations of the Grube method.

At a little country school which was kept by "a gentlewoman" in New England, many years ago, there entered a bright child of eight years, who had learned many things of her mother. There was no arbitrary grading there, but the pupils were divided according to their ages and general abilities. Each morning slates were given out, with examples written out in beautiful figures by the conscientious teacher, ready to be worked out and returned to her. The lowest class had examples in addition, the next in subtraction, and so on, the highest being something mysterious in long division. The first day Dolly soberly worked her baby "sums" and nothing was said, excepting the usual mark for perfection. She observed that she had been put in the lowest class and burned for advancement. The next day it happened that a boy whose slate contained examples in subtraction was absent; so she managed to obtain possession of his slate, worked out his examples and sent up the slate with her own. "Dolly will be in the subtrac-

tion class after this," announced the teacher, after she had examined the day's work. The week went by and the ambitious mite watched for another chance. It came soon and she did the same thing with multiplication that she had accomplished with the lower grade of work; gaining a step of promotion. The teacher was just enough not to keep her in the rear of a class she could easily keep up with. Luckily, this was not a modern school with hundreds of pupils. From the second to the third class in arithmetic was easy for the home-bred child, to whom calculating was merely practising a familiar art, and when, in the course of a month, she was able to demonstrate to her teacher that the " four rules " were each equally easy to her, and not separated by that harsh line of demarkation which ordinarily breaks their continuity she was looked upon as a phenomenon. But it was nothing but a natural development of a mind trained to appreciate *values.*

The idea of keeping a child to one thing until he is well drilled in it is much the same as if we were to forbid him to notice the sun and stars until he had exhausted the subject of his nearer neighbor, the moon. On the contrary, let us give him broad, bold

views from the beginning; not crowding knowledge upon him but furnishing information as fast as he shows curiosity. It is easy to teach the three-old architect that joining two triangles of equal size gives a perfect square; that a circle cut exactly in half gives him two halves or semi-circles, etc. No formal lessons, but all done in play and as he needs the knowledge for his building purposes.

In the course of conversation we should cultivate the child's observation of the relative size and form of all objects, aiming toward general correctness of view rather than toward accuracy in trifling details. It is much more important that he should really know what things are than that he should be able to describe them in set terms. The one knowledge is his own, the other ours. Hugo Göring, an authority upon psychology applied to teaching, desires that the child, in his early studies, shall not first learn what has been learned by others, but shall be led to understand what he has himself experienced. In this brief sentence is contained a great philosophy of life.

Youth has more capacity for exactness than it is given credit for. Are we not sometimes surprised at finding a little child a stickler for truth in details?

With this characteristic there usually goes capacity for sound reasoning, and a good mathematician is perhaps before us. By sensible training we may lead him peacefully along the path that is so often made unnecessarily thorny.

It is not necessary to divide all knowledge into small doses; making the child add up thousands before he subtracts two from three. With a "numeral frame" to help us we may give him an understanding of the four rules of arithmetic long before he knows what a figure is. And when he comes to deal with figures they will not be hateful tools of an obscure science, but merely the signs of what he already knows.

CHAPTER X

Mother Wit — and Humor

"We should not attempt to turn what is essentially serious into fun; that is corrupting both to taste and judgment. But to discover the funny side of things and portray it gracefully is both pleasing and instructive."— La Bruyére.

POSSIBLY the famous Haroun-al-Raschid of Bagdad was the only monarch who really ever became acquainted with his subjects and knew them as they were. Wandering about in disguise, he jested with them, he played their games, he entered into their intimate companionship. Stevenson gives us a revival of the *Arabian Nights* in his tales, and has brought the intrepid old fellow to life again in more sophisticated form. And here too, we see the meaning allegory of humoristic knowledge of mankind, and the importance of it in governing. It is impossible to deal with an unknown quantity in human nature. Even Jove was compelled to descend

from his throne in the skies to see the foibles and follies of mortals near by. Modern monarchs have exchanged their crowns for hats on ordinary occasions and gone about to learn the lay of their land with the vernacular upon their tongues and all their dignity put aside. And if they do not learn what they want the drama teaches them. "What state and power are impotent to achieve humor shall win."

I think that an hour spent in play with children gives us better insight into their characteristics than many hours of study of psychology. Not that I depreciate a science I have furrowed over during years of conscientious effort after methods; but the living is ever better than its shadow, and the veritable child more enlightening than the skeleton in a book. All depends on the spirit we bring to the work, however. Unless a mother can enjoy intercourse with her children and be young with them, she will never understand them nor they her. The ability to drop care and responsibility and frolic for a little space is a natural talent possessed by the born teacher, who is also the splendid mother. It is not the pedagogue who is most valuable to the intellectual world but the one who contributes new items to the fund of knowl-

edge about human nature. And it is not the learned mother who is most competent to instruct her children but the mother who *understands* them. There is nothing in the world that brings mother and child nearer together than mutual enjoyment of fun; nothing more appreciated by the young person than that maternal sense of humor which can find the funny side of life at every turn, and color dull times with the prismatic hues of optimism.

The philosopher Rénan began life under austere circumstances and his early years were full of labor and self-denial, but they were brightened by the joyous, elastic disposition of his mother, a Gascon woman who possessed the vivacity and buoyancy of her race, and who set him the example of bearing hardships with cheerful good-humor and hopefulness. The humble house at St. Grés and the little garden planted with fruit trees where he played with his sister can still be seen. From his father he inherited a dreamy, sensitive nature which gave him the gravity that always distinguished him; but it was happily balanced by his mother's cheerfulness, to which he believed himself indebted for much of his happiness in life. The early idea that obtained lodgment in his mind

that life is good and effort worth while never left him. Probably he could have repeated in his old age the very jests he had heard in his infancy from those beloved lips.

Who does not recollect with extreme pleasure the funny stories his father told at the dinner table? Or perhaps it was a grandfather who was the wit, and made the family party merry by the hearth in the evening. For my part I would not sell for cash the cheerful memories of my father's old tales, with all their concomitant circumstances of fun and good times in the family circle. There was a tradition of a certain ancestor who had a remarkable wit, and some of her little stories were contributions to certain evenings. I recall my childish sense of loss in not having known her personally!

I have a fancy that when the inscrutable fate which appoints our earthly lot was busy separating good and bad qualities that one escaped her before she had placed it and so became forever free to go where it would. And it has chosen to go where it is most needed — now lightening some toilsome pathway of poverty and sorrow, now turning to joy the trials of a soul unfitted to battle with affliction — everywhere

drawing all eyes with delight and lightening human woe by an instant's laughter. Surely, humor is Nature's best gift to mortals! Blessed among women the mother whom it possesses, who is swayed by it so that she is compelled whether she will or not, to be drawn away from contemplation of whatever is unpleasant by the irresistible propensity to see its humorous side.

To have a keen sense of the ludicrous is not necessarily to be shallow. Some of the greatest humorists unite with that sprightly gift a deep tenderness and broad sympathy. Their lips smile at sight of an absurd spectacle while their eyes overflow in recognizing the pathos that is its so frequent accompaniment. It is this quick perception of a situation as a whole, this power to see all aspects at once, that gives us just judgments tempered by mercy; severity lined with leniency, that acts as a saving grace to culprits. "Faith," said Pat, when comforted with the assurance of having a just judge; "'tis not that I want so much as one that'll lean a little!"

The gentle humor which flows like a May shower on some arid spot can make pleasant even the dry-as-dust talk about "populations" and the census reports.

There are people who make everything dull the moment they touch upon it; while others render the same topics interesting by approaching them from a new point of view. And as "interest is the life of teaching" it is the running commentary of a piece of task-work that is often best remembered; the rest fading from the mind like a blot scratched by the sharp point of Time's ruthless eraser.

Few in number are those among us whose genius is of this cast; who are essentially human in their altruism; who carry in their breasts an innocent merriment, infectious, enjoyable. How eagerly is such a person welcomed in any company; how people admire him; how little children flock about him! A parent blessed with humor has about him a magnet that subdues rebellion and charms away ill-temper; that wins spontaneous affection, ensures confidence, and opens the path to mutual comprehension, so that knowledge may be imparted with complete naturalness and ease, and many a thing "learned in suffering may be taught in song."

We all know the good mother who is zealous for her child's welfare, devoted and painstaking but narrow and stiff and solemn; believing merriment a

sort of absurdity and seriousness the proper course in life. As soon as her fledglings can travel they flee from her society to seek the genial atmosphere of some place where they can frolic and jest at their pleasure and never be called idiotic when they are inclined to be playful. They also find it difficult to have for her the measure of affection that her real worth deserves. "A good mother," says the weary son or daughter, "but —" a sigh completes the sentence. A little less goodness and a little more cheeriness would increase the attraction of the parent who moves through the nursery with a severe eye upon lapses from propriety and with a strange aloofness from the children whom she loves well but has never understood.

Heaven help the dignity which is ice-bound in its own self-righteousness; which is never self-forgetful, and loses the very best of life through a bigoted adherence to the one side of existence that relates to duty! This kind of conscientiousness, which is a disease of our New England blood, is slow in yielding to the remedies suggested by the science of the twentieth century. We could all have more sense of humor if we believed it a good thing to have and cul-

tivated it carefully instead of trampling it down. True humor is not coarse wit at another's expense; that vaudeville apishness which passes for it among the crowd of thoughtless amusement-seekers. It is a finer thing, a more delicate and lovely quality, which is tinctured with fancy and brightened by imagination. What made Charles Lamb the idol of his circle? There were twenty others as wise, as talented, as versatile; but not one who had his inimitable gift of drawing out from every subject the unnoticed trait of the pleasantly fantastic that makes a *bon mot* stick forever in the memory of the hearer. The few witty sayings of all great men and women are treasured by the world and recollected when their actions become involved in the mists of the past. Their biographers hunt for such anecdotes with pathetic eagerness and to find a new one is a triumph that brings happy tears to their eyes. The genuine humorist, in real life and in literature, is the veritable hero, beside whom the hero of melodrama is as a dancing jack, without any permanently interesting quality. The whole world is grateful to its fun-makers. Is the child less appreciative of the rainbow that relieves the gloom of work? For all mental

work has its essential periods of gloom and discouragement; the spirit is oppressed as if the drizzle of an autumn afternoon settled down upon it. The adult, aware of the good result to follow, often gives out half-way. The child, to whom the future means scarcely anything, needs still more to have his labor brightened. Why should labor be rendered so hard? I wish that all text-books could have some funny things in them; that not only history and rhetoric, but algebra and geography, physics and grammar, could be lightened and brightened by the humoristic quality. This is where the dull conscientiousness I alluded to above, comes in to discourage any attempt at novel departures. What would a school board say to a geography full of anecdotes and containing information running over with fun and wit? Kindergarten stuff!

Well; up in a certain dear old garret there used to be heaps of ancient books, coming down from discarded family libraries; and a little girl curious and eager after printed things found among other matters a small volume entitled "Countries of Europe," by A. L. O. E. In it there were stories about all the people in the world, or so it seemed to the charmed

little reader, and during the hours she spent humped up in the garret, pursuing these old-fashioned tales, she learned to appreciate something of her relations with other races, to know the world she lived in; and the facts in that book stayed by her when formal lessons, learned at school in dignified geographies, containing hideous maps full of "chief cities" and rivers to be placed according to tiresome rules of location, took flight and never came back. That book is lost, unhappily, and it has been out of print for ages, or I should certainly put it among the list of books to be studied by mothers despite the antiquity of its facts. It would show them how to make knowledge interesting, and that is better than to make it completely — perfectly, exact. Of a truth, there is no such thing as *perfectly* exact knowledge. All of it is approximately correct. Why, then, fear a little embroidery of interest that enhances its importance and keeps it fresh in the mind?

One should be careful not to give a child *erroneous* information. But to give him general, loose and somewhat indefinite ideas at first is perhaps a better thing than to try to impress him with certain distinct facts. A good general knowledge of any subject is

an excellent preparation for the filling in of details later on, at school. So the mother who has the gift of infusing joy into her instruction is sure to have her instructions remembered, while the teacher's more formal imparting of the same subject will probably pass from his mind.

One of the beauties of liveliness in teaching is that it sets children at their ease, banishes constraint and allows their minds to act freely. And the adroit instructor may add variations to his topic as his observation leads him to see the need of changes. We cannot develop the best characteristics of our children until we learn to know them well, and in order to do this we must meet them on their own ground,— see them completely at ease and without any affectations of grown-up manners. When the child has absolutely no fear of his parents and feels free to act out all his little whimsical impulses without incurring ridicule no frolicsome kitten is so funny as the youngster who is not trying to be funny at all. The sympathetic mother sees pathos and humor posing side by side in the living child groups in her nursery, and she reads in the queer sayings and doing of her miniature men and women many deep, earnest pur-

poses that throw a flash-light over abiding aims of their growing natures.

With children we may say, instead of "many a true word is spoken in jest"— that "many a jesting word is meant seriously." A child's humor is often merely earnestness. To understand it thoroughly one must be for the nonce, a child at heart. The mother who keeps her child at a distance, even when she tolerates an amount of impertinence that makes outsiders suppose her upon terms of rather absurd intimacy with him, will never be able to get into his inner nature as the mother who knows how to interest him will. Respect never yet was inspired by the person who insisted upon receiving it, but it flows out spontaneously toward those whose characters make the claim they never think of suggesting.

The mother who wants respect and merely that, will do well to keep her children at a distance and neither tolerate familiarities nor a frank disclosure of their ideas and fancies. Her *amour propre* will not then suffer. But the mother who appreciates the beauty and value of a close attachment between herself and her younger selves, and who aims to establish relations that neither time nor absence can

weaken, must be prepared to make some sacrifices in order to attain them. She must first of all, cultivate cheerfulness in her daily intercourse with them. Optimism is the glossary that explains hardships. The parent who has it ready at hand to pass on to the children may put formal authority by. The mother with a blithe and ready humor possesses a fascination that makes her companionship sought and her instructions received with avidity. And added to the present satisfaction of congenial relations with her children will be the assurance that she will dwell always in their memories like "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

"Mother had the quickest sense of humor of any one I ever met," said an elderly man with pride. And one could see that in his heart followed other thoughts. "How happy that mother made me, and how I loved her."

CHAPTER XI

The Right Method in Reading

"It is necessary that in the impressions brought to the child by instruction there should be sequence; so that the beginning and progress of his learning should keep pace with his mental development."— Pestalozzi.

IF there is one part of education that especially demands individual instruction more than other sorts, it is instruction in the art of reading. Yet parents usually consider that this is the particular function of the school. Methods have changed greatly since we were ourselves children and there may be danger of our proceeding in ways that are contrary to advanced theories upon the subject. But in truth, the schools are all merely carrying on a system of experiments that may succeed or may fail. The very same methods that are now looked upon with admiration may within a short time fall into disfavor.

Meanwhile it is certain that many of the most

brilliant persons of our generation are the products of what is called old-fashioned methods in education. So may it not be that any method is good which effects the right results? "Whatever policy has long received the sanction of the wise and good is likely to have some element of truth in it," said a profound philosopher. The belief therefore, that learning has an element of drudgery in it which cannot be escaped cannot be overturned by the rather frantic efforts of advanced theorists to convert primary schools into kindergartens. The best teacher in the world is not able to avoid the introduction of labor into intellectual work. It is well for this to be frankly admitted. There are dull spaces over which the child must be enticed by the prospect of pleasanter times to come. It is necessary for him to become used to a little hardship, since work is the law of life. But our ideal is to make the subject in hand more and more interesting, so that difficulties will be encountered near the beginning, while interest is fresh and energy at its highest point. Then, after weariness has begun to set in the encouraging suggestion may come that the worst is already over. Has not every one observed that it is always at the outset of a new thing that the

child's courage and enterprise are at their height? A new suggestion is a sort of "dare" which he takes blindly and recklessly, poor innocent, and it is by working along this line of capturing a fortress by storm that the adroit teacher scores a success.

Now, if we wait until a child is seven or eight years old to teach him how to read, or even until he is six, which is the period at which children who have no home training usually enter the primary class he will probably have already acquired a fear of the drudgery of learning the alphabet. A dull and lifeless way of imparting this essential knowledge has long since brought it into extreme disfavor. One of the older domestic novels contains a picture of a primitive country school taught by a talented young teacher who "wearied herself the whole afternoon telling Johnnie and Emma that the round letter was O and the crooked letter S." She probably wearied her small pupils almost to death also.

To do away with this bugbear modern teachers have adopted the "sight reading" method. Words are recognized as "wholes" and when a sufficient number of words have been recognized "reading follows." But spelling does not. And the kind of reading

that " follows " is a very shallow and superficial sort. Sight reading exercises one part of the mind exclusively, and that the one which is apt to be over-exercised at every point,— the memory. The system is good when conjoined with a knowledge of letters and sounds, thus enabling the child to perceive *why* certain combinations of letters form words; but not where he has no such basis to reason from. Spelling taught through " word building " is less to be banned as rote learning than sight reading, for it develops the child's reasoning powers at every step, and gives him material to go on indefinitely.

But the alphabet naturally and logically takes precedence in a sound knowledge of reading. And it may be taught to very young children in a way to make it exceedingly easy and agreeable. One bright young mother of my acquaintance devised a plan that must meet with the warm approbation of every one who tries it personally, and will doubtless succeed with other children as well as it did with her own.

She realized that the natural tendency of the child is to carry into all activities the idea of family life; to make people out of inanimate things. You may make a drab stone fascinating to an infant by imagin-

ing it peopled by a race of stony mites. So, instead of answering her little one's eager inquiries about the symbols on her painted blocks by a mechanical repetition of their names as letters, she made up a play which should familiarize the child with letters as individuals.

First, she bought a large box of plain blocks, all shapes and sizes, such as come under the name of "building blocks." Then, selecting twenty-six small cubes, she painted the letters of the alphabet on them and put them all in a box by themselves. Showing this to the child she told him that these persons all belonged to one family called the Alphabet family. There were Mother A and twenty-five children, and the father, &c. who was away on a voyage and would not be back for some time. The child's fancy seized upon the idea with avidity, and on the first day he learned with ease, the names of the mother and her first four children, who were introduced by the teacher with due formality, in their proper sequence. Upon the introduction of each new member of the family they used the other building blocks to build him a house, *just the shape of himself,* after which they drew his likeness on paper, to stand in front of his

door, as his name plate. With the four letters they played games for an hour or so, the little one amusing himself alone for a long time after the mother had withdrawn. She promised to resume the play the next day at the same hour, and then the child was taught the names of the two succeeding letters of the family. He was limited to learning two letters each day, so as not to eat more rapidly than he could digest. Every letter had a pretty tale of his adventures to relate, and in this way the child received an excellent training in language. Many were the evolutions they put the letters through; all sorts of dramas were enacted, and the familiar intercourse became so natural, that the rapidity and ease with which the three-year-old child proceeded to spell was surprising.

It was necessary to hold him back to prevent his going too fast. In twelve days he had learned the entire alphabet, and there was not the least apparent effort about it. John Burroughs' "Little Nature Studies" was taken up for sight reading, and I should be afraid to tell how quickly this child mastered its contents. In truth, he was an able child, with a thirst for knowledge.

Yet children with very ordinary abilities might be led by similar devices to learn "to read without tears" as the old copy-books say. I do not recommend teaching a child to read at three or four, except where the desire shows itself persistently. In homes where the atmosphere is bookish children will naturally be desirous of sharing an occupation their elders find so agreeable, and from entreating to have stories told them, will advance without urging to trying to read for themselves.

For some reason there was a theory in my family that I was to be kept from books as long as possible. I probably learned the letters with the aid of a nurse, from blocks, for they were mine by a sort of natural right. But my mental activity was forced to be satisfied with small doses of spelling; lessons I detested, but took in default of any others. And when at seven years, I still found the printed page a closed show to me I took the matter in hand desperately, myself, and learned to read by my own efforts. I found that the spelling tasks had enabled me to pick out a certain number of words in a book, and there was one little book that had been used to read stories from for my amusement until I had it almost by heart.

By dint of considerable hard labor I mastered its contents, bit by bit, and then the field was won. My elders thenceforth had a hard time answering my pursuing inquiries,—"How do you pronounce L-i-m-b? T-h-i-m-b-l-e?" and so on. I must have been worse than old Pumblechook, with his dreadful lessons in addition to poor little Pip. When I could get nobody to answer me, I read on, supplying my own pronunciation according to the sounds of the letters. And some queer mistakes I make in our illogical language. One name in a book, Stephen, I called throughout the entire volume, as it was written, Step-hen, making two syllables of it, and thinking it a singular name for a man, without associating it in the least with the same word, spelled as I supposed, Steven, which was my father's name. But by digging my way thus through the mazes of elementary learning I made a foundation that went rather deep into the soil of perseverance, and rendered me hardy, at least.

Most modern children, however, require the appearance of ease. They are impatient of long and difficult tasks. If we can find out any way to shorten the long path of learning to read it is desirable

to do so, and there are some improvements that it is well to adopt. Perhaps the easiest way for the child to familiarize himself with printed words is for him to learn to recite a well-known little story or poem with the book in his hand. Long before "sight reading" was advocated this appearance of reading off the printed page was a little trick beloved of children. Give a small child a newspaper and see how quickly his face will assume an absorbed expression as his eyes seem to follow words down a column, and he proudly tells you he is "reading like papa." Advantage may be taken of this taste to induce him to "read" from his picture book a selected bit of verse, printed in large letters; gradually the familiar words will begin to mean something to him. They will change from abstractions to objects with histories, and instead of the slow process that used to go on with primer lessons, where the pictures really were the sole things of interest, the words themselves will become imbued with life.

The importance of good elocution in reading is at present too little regarded. Perhaps rhetoric was over-done in the olden time and we are suffering from a reaction in its disfavor. But the mere pro-

nounciation of words is not reading; bringing to light the thought words carry is reading. How can that be accomplished if all words are pronounced in the same tone, with equal vehemence, and without inflections? Such exercises are the dull droning of the vocal apparatus only, without the accompaniment of the brain.

What are words unaccompanied by thoughts, to any child? Mere bits of task-work, to be slid over and forgotten as soon as possible. But take any little story in prose or verse, and bring out its inner meaning by the right emphasis and it becomes dramatic, spirited and interesting. Half a dozen sentences so read are worth as a lesson many pages gone over without interest in their contents. Emphasis rightly applied is the very soul of words, and no reading is comprehensible without it. Comparatively few people are accomplished in the fine art of reading aloud, and busy mothers usually put aside the idea of attempting to instruct their children in even the rudiments of elocution, believing a thorough knowledge of the subject out of their line. This is another thing mostly left to the school; and ordinarily, very badly taught there, because by the time

the child arrives the teacher finds all his time taken up with the correction of faults brought about by careless habits. But if mothers could be convinced that it is easily within their powers to give children excellent elementary knowledge of the use of the voice in reading aloud, surely they would not shirk a task that becomes with a little practise a real pastime?

I can only give here the briefest outline of a short course of such lessons, trusting that the little volume in preparation on the subject[1] from which it is taken may be read with some interest by those who care to have a more thorough acquaintance with a beautiful art. The first business in reading is to bring out meaning. Previous to bringing it out we must discover it. There is always a leading idea in every sentence, or series of sentences; the other words being used simply as make-weights, to carry on the work suggested by the chief agent. Suppose the mother means to have the child read a certain little poem aloud, both for the practise in word recognition and for mental improvement. She will run over the

[1] Our Mother Tongue; speech and reading lessons for home and school practice. Florence Hull Winterburn, B.E.A.

verses herself, privately, and find their import, then tell the child what the subject is that he is going to read about, and suggest to him that he think about that while he reads. With his mind engaged with the more important matter he will naturally not be taken up with trifling details and give atrociously wrong emphasis by making minor words louder and stronger than others. Emphasis is naturally produced in these ways: by an increase of strength in the voice, or by either a lowering or a rising in the pitch; that is, by a distinct *contrast* with the surrounding words. This is what is meant by bringing out meanings. The important word is separated from its companions, sometimes by a pause before and after it, sometimes merely by a rising or falling inflection of tone.

It will be well for the mother to keep in mind, although not to bother the little child with such regulations, the three principal rules governing emphasis:

First, that the leading idea of a new thought must be brought out.

Second, that the important words that appear require some emphasis.

Third, that words which merely carry forward the

thought or are explanatory, are not to be emphasized, but casually used, as one would deal with unimportant words in conversation.

This will be made clearer by analyzing a little set of verses. We will take an old poem, called

AUNT TABITHA

whose subject is the difference between girls in the olden time and modern girls. The words suggesting the leading idea are here emphasized, the others being merely slid along without marked inflections of the voice.

> "*Whatever* I do, and whatever I *say*,
> Aunt Tabitha tells me *that* isn't the way;
> When *she* was a girl (forty summers ago)
> Aunt Tabitha tells me they *never* did so."

Now, the tendency of the child will be to bring out constantly, as an important word, the name of the aunt, which is, however, told in the title and remains in the mind, so that it does not require repeated emphasis. Things that have been once told and are no longer new, are not to be emphasized. What we are now interested in is what the aunt says and thinks. The next verse goes forward a little, bringing in the

ideas of the niece. So, the first introduction of this personage will require emphasis.

"Dear aunt! If I only would take *her* advice!
But I like my *own* way, and I find it so nice!
And besides, I forget half the things I am told;
But they will all come *back* to me, when I am old."

Observe how the few emphatic words carry the entire meaning along, so that all the others may be slid over. The last verse contains the gist of the whole, and the child will be pleased with the roguishness of the implication of the aunt's absurdity. His attention may be drawn to the meditative tone of the phrase, "I am thinking" and the successive emphatic words referring to this aunt's progenitor.

"I am thinking, if Aunt knew so *little* of sin,
What a *wonder* Aunt Tabitha's aunt must have been!
And her grand-aunt — it *scares* me — how shockingly sad
That we girls of to-day are so FRIGHTFULLY bad!"

The little child of four or five enjoys scarcely anything so much as recitation; and the period when this taste is at its height is the mother's opportunity to train his voice in speaking and reading. Let her begin by teaching him how to manage his breath, a point in

which the ordinary school child is wholly at fault. Children are apt to waste breath by mingling it with their tones, producing what is called the "aspirate tone." Aspiration, or a half whispered tone is unpleasant and irritating to the vocal organs. It arises often from bashfulness, and the best way to cure it is by exercising the voice in the "pure tone." Whoever once masters this beautiful tone will not need much further instruction in the fine art of reading aloud. Management of the breath is most important; and in addition to the benefit to the voice knowledge of correct breathing has a decided effect on the health. The first thing is to train the child in breathing as deeply as possible with his mouth closed. Then, have him open his mouth and draw in breath through his nose at the same time. Next, have him pronounce a sentence, letting out all the breath with the words, and breathe in again, entirely through his nostrils, while his mouth is open. After some practise he will acquire the difficult art of breathing entirely through the nose while reading, and be on the way toward the acquisition of the pure tone, which is entirely free from nasality and aspiration.

The pure tone is one of kindness and sweetness.

Our old professor of elocution used to call it "the Sunday afternoon tone," with a sly hit at girls' habit of putting on a beautiful voice with their glad rags, when they expected company. Where the home atmosphere is what it should be and children hear pleasantly modulated tones from their elders they will fall naturally into the use of this harmonious tone.

Harsh, shrill notes are with children the result either of disease, excitement or imitation. Their bright, thin little voices lend themselves readily to depicting happy moods, and the literature we select for them to read should deal with agreeable incidents and be full of variety and interest. A poem I have found very attractive is "Robert of Lincoln" which is full of dramatic effects without tragedy. The little bird notes at the end of each verse may be imitative, lending additional sprightliness to recitation.

As far as possible, let the child discover the author's meaning for himself. When he has learned to recognize most of the words in ordinary reading matter of a simple class, he may be encouraged to tell you the tale, just as if he were talking. This is in fact, the secret of good reading; to make it conversational. My mother was a beautiful reader, and had had fine

training in elocution after the old method, which did not involve the knowledge of any rules that would enable one to impart knowledge to another; but the one suggestion she did make was very useful: "Always read just as you would talk." For ordinary reading there is no better rule. Get the child to make the meaning of something plain to you; he is to explain what he himself knows. And this brings us to the great point which is so much neglected: training in articulation.

The utterance of little ones even in the best families, is usually thick; the words running together instead of standing out separately and distinctly. The beauty of the English language is its distinctness, and its lack of that slurring which is a sort of melody in the Latin tongue but spoils our stronger Saxon. But beautiful pronunciation does not come without training. Children must be taught to shape their mouths to pronounce different words, some requiring the flat, some the round and others, the long shape. One little exercise is useful, and is a popular one with school-teachers, but much more beneficial when taught in the earlier years, before children become self-conscious.

Have the child pronounce the three sounds "OO, AH, EE," with the mouth in the three different shapes, first in the round shape, secondly, in the broad shape, then in the long or flattened shape, always taking a deep breath before beginning and letting out all the air with the words. He may pronounce the three words consecutively, then backward, thus;—"OO, AH, EE,—EE, AH, OO." And as many times as he wishes, only provided that he does not become careless and make his mouth take a wrong shape. That can be easily avoided. The next thing to be done is to draw his attention to those words taking the round, the broad or the long shape of mouth, and train him to adjust his lips in pronouncing them.

Yes, all this requires care and some time. But it is only one little lesson at a time, and soon over. What we have to do in education is to get our child in the way of self-training. When a mother has done her very best she is not responsible for the way a thing turns out for an offspring who neglects to profit by advantages that have been generously offered. But she will never regret the effort bestowed on any one of her children, even if the result is not strikingly

successful, since no one knows where or how the seed sown in infancy will germinate and grow to the perfect fruit, perhaps generations after.

CHAPTER XII

Self-Expression Through Drawing

"I wish you to be persuaded that success in your art depends almost entirely on your industry; but the industry I recommend is not that of the *hands* but of the *mind.*"— Sir Joshua Reynolds.

THE eyes, unaided by reason, give us very false impressions of things. Each instant we correct our first impressions by an amended idea of what is possible and probable; accuracy and certainty depending to a great degree upon the range of our experience. The extent to which we are dependent upon experience is proved by our deference to those persons who *know* localities, surroundings and scenes to which we are strangers. At sea we place little reliance upon our own vision and much upon the judgment of the sea-going man whose eyes are not bewildered by the dazzle and shimmer of moving waters. On mountain tops we estimate no distance without consulting the guide who is fa-

miliar with the land. When in art galleries and cathedrals we walk softly, venturing few criticisms until we have heard the wisdom of better judges, and can adjust our understanding according to theirs. We know in our hearts, that our unaided senses play us strange tricks; that much touching, handling, measuring, must corroborate the testimony of eyes and ears before we dare accept what they give us as truth.

And if adults are thus helpless before novel features of an ever changing world, how much more helpless are little children, whose imaginations are not yet controlled by reason, and who have no experience to fall back on as a corrective of the grotesque! As soon as possible we ought to put in their hands a weapon with which to combat riotous fancy which constantly leads their wits astray. We must teach them to measure, weigh and calculate so that they may be able to judge with confidence in their own senses. We should train them to *reproduce* in some form, things they see and hear, then compare their first ideas with the experience of others, to get the knack of critical observation and the power of making a good judgment.

The ordinary parent usually corrects a child's wrong impressions by a simple contradiction of his mistakes. "It is not the way you think, but this way." Without having to exercise his mind at all, the young person merely turns his ideas somewhat to suit another point of view, and philosophically comes to think most things of little importance, after all. One way of seeing is as good as another; and saves trouble. There are an astonishing number of people in the world whose judgment is worth nothing because they have never been accustomed to look at things with a single eye to their relations with other things: they see what they like to see, that is all.

Now, the best way to initiate the child in the difficult art of judging values — without which knowledge men and women are helpless when it comes to dealing with business — is to let him experiment very early with plastic materials which he can turn and twist at his pleasure. The infantile pursuit of making mud pies is a rich experience in dexterity if it is played as a game of competition. Which one can make the pie that is roundest? One little one compares his pie with that of his neighbor, sees something to amend and shapes his bit of mud over

again more cunningly. Sea sand offers another means of getting self-education in artistic values. Caves and houses are built and rebuilt with endless patience, the youthful architect continually improving on his methods, yet scarcely perceptibly, since sand is wilful and limited in its capacity to be manipulated. Snow is better, but in winter the "peptic stimulant" of biting wind converts all action into sport, and fewer pretty forms are constructed than forts.

But the instinct of a child to manipulate some soft stuff, like dough or putty, leads him to chase every will-o'-the-wisp of opportunity and get into trouble with his unsympathetic family. Old time cooks were indulgent with this infantile frenzy and allowed a little space in ample kitchens and generous bits of cake dough; but there is very little baking at home nowadays, and less room for kitchen chemistry and the plastic arts. Sweet heaven grant that home kitchens and the dear home atmosphere may not be altogether swept out of sight by certain iconoclasts yclept reformers! The children would be the losers by any scheme that lessened the wholesome labors of individual homes, whatever the advantage to their novelty-seeking elders.

Dough is a good material for modeling. I taught my own little ones to make dough dolls and animals before they were old enough to appreciate the real use of their craft and merely thought of eating their creations after baking them. But they were scarcely out of the kindergarten before I set up a modeling table, with a goodly supply of white putty, and we began to have great times making things. In due course followed a visiting teacher from the Academy of Design, who supervised them in their plays and adroitly turned games into work. Three weekly lessons from her with the aid of my own small knowledge, gave us all a start so that modeling began to be a real delight, and we fashioned flowers, fruits and objects, like vases and cups and quaint boxes; making some very nice things and constantly gaining accuracy of perception and confidence in our own judgment. The modeling table was an experiment station where every one had to demonstrate his ideas. If one believed that the vase to be modeled was of such and such a height and shape, he made it so, and only learned his mistakes after he realized that somebody else had worked according to a better idea and produced better results. The referee was always Na-

ture; that is, the flower or object itself, not a second-hand view of it through the eyes of another person.

From modeling to drawing was the most natural of transitions. We first began to draw things we had shaped, and found this quite easy, familiarity having been gained with the forms in question through creating them in the rough, as it were, with clay, so that the finer use of the pencil seemed only pleasant progress. As the fanciful one of the group observed — she was five —" First we have the thing, and then we make its shadow." It was absolutely the right idea, for drawing is but shadowing forth reality. " The art of seeing nature, or in other words, the art of using models, is in reality the great object, the point to which all our studies are directed," said Reynolds. By preceding drawing with modeling these children learned to use models easily and deftly. Moreover, the pencil became a treasure to be appreciated, for everything had to be shaped first, drawing it being the reward of previous efforts. There was no tiresome reiteration of faulty pictures — endless chains of distorted creatures such as had been transferred from their baby brains to big sheets of brown paper in the days before they learned some-

thing of "the true and the beautiful" in Nature. They laughed now, at those treasured sheets of waste paper; yet they had served a purpose, too. Amusement comes naturally before planned work. Primitive man must have gambled with his rough materials for a long time before he took genuine interest in what he was accomplishing by chance. I believe in freedom with the pencil as with all other tools of art and crafts. As soon as a little child is old enough to keep it out of his mouth and off the walls, a pencil should be put in his hands to experiment with. When he tires of making aimless marks and begins to try to shape objects one general direction may be given him: to try to draw everything just as he sees it. Don't tell him that the table has four legs nor that trees must be rooted in the ground; let him find out these facts for himself. At first, doubtless, he will have groves of trees flying in the ambient, and clouds lying on the earth. But he will come soon to laughing at himself and get around to truth by making mistakes. Self-criticism is more valuable than any teaching, and a person must feel his own imperfections before he aspires to better things. I think a child of genuine sense is seldom

satisfied with his own work, but he puts the best face upon it in order to be taken seriously. To be laughed at is a childish horror, and every one should be very careful not to bring this humiliation upon him. It is hard to realize that a little thoughtless ridicule of any of their first weak attempts at art may result in forever blighting the personality and originality of the coming man or woman. But the initial efforts of a mind toward independence are feeble and cowardly; industry is not so persistent but that any young person may easily be persuaded to desist from a pursuit that is made to appear beyond his powers. It must be confessed that children's little drawings tempt to mirth, but Mr. Sully has taught us to regard youthful caricatures with respect.

Probably nothing is held in higher estimation now by enlightened educators than drawing; as a means of developing the mind. Teachers use the pencil constantly to illustrate their subjects, and the child uses it in rude but graphic fashion to reproduce his impressions. The aim is to train children to observe closely and remember truthfully, and nothing could more admirably further this purpose than the habit of calling upon them to describe by a few

strokes of the pencil objects that have been brought to their attention. Picture making is an occupation natural to man in his simplest, most untaught state, and it is likewise one of the earliest voluntary pursuits of all children.

Until a few years ago drawing was taught as an accomplishment, and was looked upon somewhat askance by teachers of sterner branches. The school boy who, like poor Tommy Traddles, was addicted to solacing himself after discipline by producing shoals of skeletons on his slate, did so at his peril; and the mechanical genius who simply could not resist filling all the paper he could borrow with engines and boats was restricted to that enjoyment during his recess only.

In schools for girls an hour or so a week was given to copying the model drawings contained in Warren's books, and after hundreds of hours spent in this spirited employment the young person became expert enough to make a faulty copy of the drawing propped upon her desk, and then threw away the thing with relief; having conceived a real distaste for the very name of drawing as an art. A few years later it is probable that she found it impossible to comply with

the entreaty of her little one to draw him the picture of a horse and wagon, or even a flower!

When "drawing from the round" became popular much was hoped from it, but here too, the free-hand course was a perpetual copying of something put before pupils. They were shown what to look at and how to look at it: the master judged for them; they had no choice either as to subject or treatment; their faults were pointed out, and they learned to see with the eyes of the teacher instead of with their own. The result was servility in treatment and a deadening of original power. Even the avowed purpose of making good artists was frustrated by this poor method. An observing spectator has not put it too strongly when he declared:—"It is the fault of all current systems that they limit the youthful mind to small inventions. All who propose to teach or learn art in any form should seriously consider free-hand as the true key to all its practise. It is a great stimulant to quickness of perception."

The aim of the new education is not to make artists of all children but to give them command of the pencil as of the pen, to use as a mode of self-expression. The mechanical arts are closely allied to drawing, and

modeling, wood-carving and bent iron work are delightfully taught in the manual training classes that now follow the kindergarten in really fine schools. But all schools that put forth the claim to be considered excellent have not genuine merit, and it is even more necessary now than it used to be before systems were so complicated, for parents to use great discretion in selecting schools and teachers. Even where the children have the privilege of attending an ideal kindergarten and passing on in due course to manual training classes, much remains to be done at home by the mother's instruction and encouragement. I reproduce here a few paragraphs from the pen of Mrs. May Lillian Dean, who contributed several valuable articles on the subject of "Handicrafts in the Home" to my magazine *Childhood* some years ago. She worked out a most excellent system of home instruction for her own children which might be copied with advantage by other mothers.

"A true conception of the reality of form," observes Mrs. Dean, "can only be gained through modeling in the round. Modeling should therefore at least go hand in hand with, if not precede, drawing, in the teaching of children. Handling the clay and

an interest in its convertibility into known forms may precede instruction. One little boy not yet three delights in the horses and dogs that are roughly modeled for him. He is too young to attempt them yet for himself but is beginning to show familiarity with the method, by altering the shape of those already made and mending those which meet with mishaps.

"Modeling in the round aims at producing the actual forms in their true relations to one another, as in a bust, statuette, statue or group. Modeling in relief aims at producing the *appearance* of the round obtained by preserving relatively true proportions in the projection or thickness above the background."

This is, I believe, much more difficult, and properly comes after considerable experience has been gained in round modeling. Making flowers and fruit on a plaque of plaster is exceedingly pretty and interesting work, and my own little daughter produced several of such plaques at the age of six years, which are creditable to her industry and skill.

"Clay," continues Mrs. Dean, "is the universal material used for modeling. The common gray clay which costs from two to three cents a pound, is all that is necessary for the purpose. It dries crumbly

and cannot be baked, but for round, bulky subjects such as an apple, where there are no thin edges to crack away, it may be allowed to dry, and will last until some accident happens. It is used by artists for work which is to be cast in plaster, and must be kept well moistened with water as long as the work is in process, and cast before it has been allowed to harden. The clay should be kept in a stone crock, so it will retain its moisture.

"*Thumbs* are the best tools, but it may be necessary to supplement them with some small wooden tools, to secure effects. Poor tools cannot give satisfaction, so choose those of firm boxwood."

The three or four essential small implements may be purchased at any art store for a trifling sum.

"Choose bulky objects for modeling in the round, and for relief work subjects which are broad in character, by which I mean surfaces not too much cut up. Very young children enjoy making marbles. They break off a piece of clay, press it between the first fingers and thumbs of both hands and then roll it round and round between the palms. No two marbles are alike and the children find a charm in the variety of size. The next step may be to an apple as

a subject to be copied in clay. This may be given to children of six and upwards, and the lesson should be conducted in the following manner: Place the apple on the table in front of the child and a small board on which is a lump of clay. Then say, 'Look at this apple and tell me what shape it is?' 'Round,' will be the prompt reply. 'Is it quite round?' you will ask, and he will then be led to discover how and where it differs from a sphere and why. When the form has been well studied he may begin by breaking off a piece of clay about the size of a walnut, and then add smaller pieces to it until it begins to look like the apple. When it is nicely rounded it is better to hold it in the hand instead of letting it remain on the board. The hollows for the eye and stalk can be fashioned by means of the fingers, and the eye itself finished by the help of a small stick or tool. For the stalk a real twig is best, just poked in where it ought to be, after the hollow has been nicely smoothed and rounded by the fingers. In precisely the same way let the boy proceed to make clay copies of similar objects,— a pear, lemon, potato, musk melon, a bunch of three or five bananas, a bunch of grapes, and so on."

" Small plaster casts are very inexpensive, and good copies of small animals, heads in relief, profiles and grotesques can be bought for twenty-five cents and upwards."

Mrs. Dean most sensibly observes that continual comparison with one's model is necessary for good work, and the child should be admonished not to be satisfied with anything less than really good results. " Encourage your children always to press on, in hopes of better results and higher attainments."

After some skill has been attained in modeling drawing naturally follows, as the modeled objects offer excellent subjects for copying. Unless the child is gifted with some talent in this line he will not be enthusiastic at first about the use of the pencil after the livelier practise of modeling. In that case it will be well not to urge him, but to win his interest by holding out a reward for nice work with the pencil. Where competition does not enter in, I believe in the idea of appropriate reward for hard, earnest work. Drawing especially, is too beautiful an art to be made a task; it should be associated with pleasure.

Violet-le-duc, one of the best modern authorities in this field, lays great stress upon geometry as the

foundation for drawing. To carry on the education of a child in the way he suggests a parent would need a profound knowledge of science and art. But his principles are valuable and some of his exercises are simple enough for use in all homes. The child of six years — some at a younger age — may be taught to make cubes of paper and then to copy them; first singly, then all together. He can collect leaves of different shapes and draw them; also, disks cut from a rubber tube, pressed into the form of a honeycomb, and he will thus learn why Nature teaches her bees to construct their cells in this compact form. The question he should constantly be led to ask is,— why does this thing have this particular shape instead of some other? By perceiving that *function* is everywhere the first consideration he will become imbued with the deepest truth of art, that beauty is harmony between inward purpose and outward form; an expression of the perfection of these two.

I myself, incline greatly toward the geometrical basis for drawing, and some of our best schools of design use it; but justice compels me to allude to a system which has much vogue in France and is endorsed by Delacroix. It is said that it enables all

parents, without understanding drawing themselves, to teach their children. It is the Calvé method of drawing from memory, and this is the starting point of the system; — A piece of gauze is placed over a cast and on the gauze a faint tracing made of the object beneath, exactly reproducing it. Then, this tracing is set up as a model and copied, the copy being constantly measured against the original and faults corrected; the pupil learning both outline and perspective by this continual comparison. The third step is to put aside the copies and draw the object from memory.

The system *may* do all that is claimed for it, but although it offers possibilities in the way of a fascinating pursuit to girls and boys of genuine artistic talent, I doubt its usefulness to the general student, and it is manifestly unsuited to children under ten or twelve years. Any one wishing to know more of the method may be referred to Madame Calvé's charming books.

Drawing from memory is one of the most difficult things in the world to do. Even professional artists find that they must rely largely upon hasty jottings made upon the spot, as suggestions for pictures.

They keep memorandum books, as most people do, but their artistic short-hand is only comprehensible by themselves. Those who are not artists need to look closely at what they wish to recollect, for they must depend upon their memory to bring back details to them. It is an excellent corrective of superficial observation to sketch a scene as we *think* we saw it, and afterward return to that scene and take another view. It is a training both in accuracy and humility, for we learn how easy it is to deceive ourselves as to what we believe we have observed.

The smallest child should be encouraged to try to use the pencil, if merely to scribble at first. Facility in using the fingers is valuable, and if awkwardness can be overcome very early so much the better. I think that previous to any formal instruction little ones should be let alone to depict their own fanciful ideas. Sometimes they accidentally strike out curiously correct outlines of objects, in their free and spontaneous efforts. But we must keep in mind that the use of drawing to people in general is not so much to teach art ideas as to train them in accuracy and precision. Scientific precision results from habitual use of the pencil to illustrate ideas.

Photography has to some extent replaced the older habit of sketching scenes and countries travelers wish to remember, and the camera is a delightful companion on a journey. But the camera cannot snap a thought, and the skilful pencil can. Language can be loose and vague, and the listener's mind get but a faint conception of what is meant, but a few bold strokes of the pencil brings the whole matter quickly before one. Here is another important factor to the child. Finding that what he draws means just what it represents and not something else, he learns not to put down anything he does not intend to show. He becomes truthful, as art is truthful. Imaginative drawing, or romancing with the pencil is a fascinating pastime which sensitive children will usually indulge in for their personal amusement only. When joined with some knowledge of outline, it is useful to the young person, as accustoming him to depict the *thought* that possesses him, and so make it clearer to himself. Let the child draw at his good will and pleasure, without fearing that he will turn out an artist. If he gains mastery with the pencil he may turn out a man of acute common sense.

CHAPTER XIII

Early Social Ideas

"The most general statement that we can arrive at is that geography deals with men in their whole physical and social environment. The whole man with the sum total of influences brought to bear upon him is the subject of geography."— McMurry.

THE broad general culture which the child can get by right home training will have the great advantage of preventing a certain narrowing of his mind by the reiteration of a catalogue of facts that are the essential equipment of school routine. One of them is the insistence upon attention to immediate surroundings to the detriment of interest in those that are more remote, but of equal if not greater importance. There has come about recently a special kind of method of teaching geography and history, meant — with the best intentions — to imbue the pupil with the sentiment of patriotism, and give him a practical knowledge of the earth in its com-

mercial aspect; to lead him to believe, in a word, that his native land is the most wonderful, unique, marvelous earth country, and that his own state, his particular place of residence, the buildings that happen to belong to his town, are the most engrossing subjects of interest that can engage him.

Now, considering that schools are very largely made up of pupils of foreign origin, who should grow into liking for their adopted country and learn to understand her political institutions, this policy is entirely sane and wise; but from the point of view of assuming that the mind of a child is naturally more interested in details than in generals, in what is near at hand than in what is far away, and consequently, more able to concentrate its attention on New York city, for instance, than on Athens or London, I think it is erroneous. If present day children are deficient in imagination and in sympathy with past civilizations the fault lies with our excessive zeal to make them practical. We clip the budding wings of their idealism and later on, wonder why they cannot fly.

There is an element of the Gradgrind system in modern schools which it is almost hopeless to attempt to alter at present; consequently, we must look to

home training to correct its narrowing influence. By following out a course of instruction that is natural and in accord with methods that have been found to favor breadth of mind and generous culture mothers may fortify the characters of their children against a too prevalent egotism. Contrary to prevailing opinions I contend that to all unspoiled children the remote has a fascination; that big, general ideas take more hold on their minds than trifling facts; that ancient history, picturesquely presented, explains the present to them; that the idea of the earth as a whole is as acceptable as the offer of a boulevard vista, ending in a flat-iron building; and that they grasp with more alacrity the suggestion of a scheme of creation in the universe than of a spool manufactory.

All kinds of knowledge have their time and place. It is an excellent plan to familiarize a child with every form of mechanism; to show him watch factories, mints and banks, all the baby streams of his native town, mills and logging camps. The out-door excursions which progressive schools have substituted for more formal geography lessons are useful, but chiefly as a means of developing the child's perceptive faculties and memory. I doubt but that he will after

so much time spent in similar studies, lose all interest in geography in its larger aspect; the mind clogged with a multitude of details becomes unable to generalize.

Indeed, I have found that some very bright young persons, graduates of our best high schools, have an intimate knowledge of many matters that have never, in the course of my life, had any bearing on sociology as I know it, but they have the vaguest ideas about the people of eastern lands and could not tell you, to save them, what is the chief city of Poland or who Zoroaster was. Not material items, of course, but sample facts of their lack of interest in what has not come under their immediate observation. That is, their understandings are restricted; their sympathies contracted to what they have been taught to consider useful. It does not matter to them who founded Carthage; but it is exciting that Bryan refuses to disclose his views on the Mexican situation. Again, politics have their right and proper place; the privilege of hearing the daily news discoursed in the home is enlightening and edifying; but all this is not geography in its higher aspect.

Macaulay declared —"All the triumphs of truth

and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and every age, have been the work of Athens." Is it not something to be able to trace back to its source the forces that have molded civilizations and developed modern intelligence? Is not the WHY of life more important than the mere IS? The child would say, if he could explain, that it is more important; and to him much more deeply interesting. He will not be able to help learning, by mere propinquity, most of the facts about his immediate environment that are essential to him; when he goes to school he will be obliged to study all these material things. But probably he will scarcely hear the name of Athens or of Mesopotamia, the cradle of the race, for many long years, until he is far along in his course, and his early zeal for the picturesque features of history has changed into a jaded dislike of everything that does not help him to pass his "exams." It is to be able to pass "exams" after all, and not to gain culture, that the child studies at school. And after he has passed them, what then? "Examinations," said Guyot, "means permission to forget."

Will not the mother see to it that her child, likely to starve away from home, for opportunity to know

mankind in his social relations with the universe, gets, early in his career, nourishment for his natural interest in his race? The awakening of the feeling of kinship with mankind, the pleasure of discovering the beginning of things, as revealed in ancient history, even so far back as the story of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the satisfaction of comprehending something of the bigness of the earth, will be owing to her. Warm and living from his mother's lips fall those suggestive words that are to make the basis of all the child's knowledge of the richest of the sciences — sociology. From her he learns to love or to hate mankind; to become interested in others, or to grow wrapped in himself, indifferent to humanity. How powerful then, is her influence over his future! Upon her intelligence and kindness depend to a large extent, the attitude he will maintain toward people and to the future as well as the past. No other study is so intimately connected with family life as geography, including its correlative, history of races; no other so essentially the province of parents.

What an incomparable advantage it is to a child to hear from his father's lips tales of his forefathers,

when the country was young! The innate desire to grasp some spot on earth as belonging to and identified with one's own family, is thus satisfied. Here our grandsire cleared the forest and built his house, here his sons hunted bears and defended themselves against the revengeful Indians. Proud and happy are the small descendants of the early settlers when later on, they come across the names of Revolutionary heroes that they knew as ancestors. But with finer altruism unperverted child nature thrills with joy in the contemplation of greatness wherever exhibited. It needs only the right touch to set flowing the springs of enthusiasm and sympathy.

Let the mother read the page of Greek history which tells of the heroic Spartan boy silent and smiling under pain of the foxes' bite and see if it is not a salutary lesson in endurance. Let her dwell upon the dangers and difficulties overcome by the early settlers of our land, and point out how all our ease and prosperity is built upon their wise and courageous plans. But do not neglect to tell them that when America was fighting for her freedom it was not her mother country she was fighting but the perverted laws of England's selfish rulers. The best and most

devoted Englishmen were friends of their American brothers who sought to carry out in the new land the noble ideal of Anglo-Saxon government. It will charm the children to learn that our New England town meetings only repeated the "folk-meet" of old Britain; that even the dissimilar custom of our southern states merely carried out the newer ways of the mother country in their different idea of parish and county government. The cultivation of this feeling of inter-relationship of the nations of the world, while starting him out in a broad view of life, will in no wise lessen his love for his own country, any more than knowing that he has uncles and aunts and grandparents and cousins of all degrees of removal lessen his affection for his father and mother.

Women will need to renew their knowledge of general history a little in order to be prepared to answer the eager questions of their children about all the interesting facts suggested by such studies, but a short course of reading should be all that is necessary, for the chief thing is to give the young mind *principles* and ideas to work on; the facts can be studied out later on. The history of the world's development is a wondrous story, full of romance and

excitement, if presented from the standpoint of evolution. I am not at all certain about the moving picture shows being the best sources of information as to the habits of the early cave-dwellers. But I do know that Sir John Lubbock's tiny book on primitive man is valuable and appropriate as nursery lore. And then, apart from all religious signification, what is more extraordinary and impressive than certain portions of the Old Testament, to bring before the imagination realization of the early struggles of mankind? From that to the beautifully simplified tales of Herodotus, taking in a slight reference to crude forms of Pantheism and idol-worship, is but a natural step. "History is philosophy teaching by examples," and also, it is the purest lesson in the broad religion of humanity that we ever get. I am not so zealous an advocate of biography as are some educators; to me it appears that a single individual, taken out from his environment and into the lime-light, sheds his racial relations. Absorbing interest in personalities is something not to be too much encouraged in children. They have that by instinct. We should constantly have for an aim the lifting them out of the narrowness; the extending of their limita-

tions of view and opinion. That is the especial reason for beginning the study of geography with reference to astronomy rather than to the most adjacent canal. The child who is early habituated to look up rather than down, for his insight into reasons for existing things, who is early trained to conceive of design in the universe, beyond the scope of that material government which proscribes, prohibits and commands matters relating to parks and buildings, will never get mistaken notions of God as a gigantic policeman; nor have a contempt for those who wear different complexions, outside or within.

The great lesson of history is that of tolerance and love for all mankind. And geography merely explains its sister science, and makes concrete its great principles. Nothing better has been said about education than the saying of Herbart, the most incorrigible idealist, as he was the most practical of tutors: "The final aim of instruction is morality. But the nearer aim which instruction in particular must set before itself in order to reach the final one is, Many-sidedness of interest."

In its variety of interest geography and history are unsurpassed. I speak of them together, for they

are one and inseparable. One cannot think of a being without a habitat; nor of a habitat without a possible creature belonging to it. If, as the baby said, "Everything is Nature excepting the houses," we may aver that everything is geography excepting what is history. Place and time are all of living.

How early should we begin to teach the child geography and history? One authority says, at the end of the first year! It must be something then, as our French cousins express it, that "teaches itself." But the authority in question merely meant that the mother may then begin to tell Grimm's household tales to the baby. That is very well, but I cannot exactly agree with this writer in calling fairy tales real history. They have their place, but the first strong impression upon the child's tender mind should be made with sturdier stuff. Perhaps with stories from the classics. The Odysseus may be tried upon the child of four or five, if parents are prepared to meet all the questions which will assail them about the heathen gods. The natural method is to begin with primitive man and with the earth as it was in his day. It has some difficulties, in the way of geographical description, but they may be easily over-

come by avoiding detailed relations. Make the story anecdotal; continually bringing in unexpected bits of odd lore, such as can be gleaned from any good natural history, and which serve to fasten the hearer's mind on the subject. Recollecting the illustration will help him to recall the fact. I think we have to wrap up almost every idea that is not immediately related to our own interests, in sugar. The most accomplished preacher sweetens his sermon with illustration; the successful lecturer does not despise the funny story that hits the mark. And an audience goes away pleased with the wit of a lecturer when it would otherwise be indifferent to the wisdom.

As a matter of fact, the earlier lessons in geography begin in the kindergarten; at that time when little ones puddle in the sand, building roads and rivers and mock cities. They get concrete notions then which may be supplemented when they leave kindergarten to spend several intervening years at home under their mother's training, before returning to an advanced grade of school. At four or five years they can be instructed without formal teaching, by stories and games, and especially by conversation. Trumbull, who wrote an interesting treatise upon

training the mind in infancy, says: "It is by conversation upon actual objects and feelings that the parent first calls forth the glimmering intelligence of the child. By this method alone it is possible to give the child a stimulus to attention; for it interposes nothing between the child and the living voice of his instructor to prevent the full play of that mutual sympathy which is the very breath of school life."

It is astonishing how much information can be imparted to children simply by conversation. The privilege of being admitted to the family circle, when by good fortune it happens to be composed of cultivated persons who have had considerable experience, is an inestimable piece of luck for the child. Such bare, cold facts as the habits of the people in Alaska or India take on vivid interest when coming fresh from the lips of a traveled uncle or cousin; a single curious occurrence that may have happened to them suffices to fix a dozen correlative circumstances that might have otherwise never been learned. Everything that can be learned outside of books is a boon. That mother is wise who reads for herself and talks out with her children what she has studied for their benefit.

I believe in little ones having a sand pile out in the back yard, not only for play but for educational purposes, but every one has not a back yard, nowadays. A sand table in the kitchen or nursery answers the purpose, and may be used to illustrate many ideas gleaned from the talks on geography and history. The child must be taught the points of the compass sometime; the sooner the better. He must learn the relation of the sun and moon to the earth, and why not let him learn while the fun of representing these sons and daughters of the universe affords him spontaneous amusement?

A little collection of minerals and foreign curiosities is valuable as a means of inspiring interest in strange lands and people. What the child can see and handle has an actual importance to him, yet never should there be neglected the truth that the concrete is not the whole thing to any natural child; he craves, as a lover the moonlight, an artist the sight of purple clouds, the atmosphere of fairyland thrown as a glistening veil over the too bald facts of the near-by world. Romance in history is eagerly welcomed by every intelligent adult and it is received with enthusiasm by children. Since it is so human to crave the

unusual and wonderful it is well that there is so much of both in Nature and life. We have only to find and appropriate it. The gift of finding it does not belong to all; but even the prosaic woman may cultivate in herself something of fancy and liveliness so that her instructions may not be flat and commonplace. A few visits to the best primary schools will give her food for thought, and furnish suggestions that she can enlarge upon. I attended a geography lesson recently given in one of the finest schools of New York by a talented young teacher. It was rapid and brilliant in its transitions as a scene from vaudeville. Her enthusiasm carried the class along interested and eager to the end. Like a trained actress she was fully up to her part and the pupils had little more to do than follow her line of thought. Everything was made beautifully clear and facts were dovetailed into each other in a way to excite my admiration, when I recalled certain wearisome hours once spent in hunting up obscure towns on badly printed maps and boundaries that were utterly useless as knowledge and related to nothing else. But — not long afterward, having occasion to be with several of these same young pupils and converse with them

about some of the things contained in that brilliant lesson I found them singularly vacant of all ideas on the subject. The whole thing had passed, like a dream. I think the reason was that they were merely passive spectators at a show. They had no part to perform, no active work to arouse their energies. It is not by *talks to* pupils but by conversation *with* them that the best results are effected. And here is one decided advantage of home teaching. It is not formal; it allows scope for that give-and-take of facts and fancy which not only interest at the time but become associated with some finer feelings which have the faculty of permanent life.

In her little geography lessons the mother should always weave in some story that will serve to show up the background of an essential fact. The salient features should be illustrated so that the child cannot think of the kite without glancing also at its tail. Literature teems with books written for children about strange lands and people. Du Chaillu's books are fine, Kipling's Jungle Books charming and "The World and Its People" nearly all that can be desired. But there are in every good public library quantities of smaller volumes, specializing places and races,

which the mother can readily run through previous to her general talks about certain countries. History makes a running accompaniment to geography lessons, and cannot be left out. It is always wise to strike while the interest of the child is fresh in a particular topic and give him all that he asks for. Avoid needless details, especially those that lead away from the broader side of the subject. I think that the child is perhaps, to be rather than the teacher, the leader in selecting his material. At least, his especial interest in a particular thing may be taken as a guide. For instance, if there has chanced to be a conversation at the dinner table the day previous, alluding to the Arabian mode of traveling, is there any reason why the next day's lesson may not hinge upon that topic? As well Arabia as China or the state of Kansas. Geography may be discursive and jump all over the known world at an instant's notice. The important thing is that the little pupil learn the facts that he wants then and there. That is the knowledge that will stay by him longest. First arouse his interest, or if it has already been accidentally aroused, then follow up his awakened enthusiasm. Dear me,— an aroused enthusiasm is a very valu-

able thing, and not to be neglected! How many weary college professors would give anything for that spark of genuine interest in a subject under discussion which it is the happier fortune of the magnetic mother to strike out without much effort.

It is not easy to suggest anything like a formal schedule for lessons in geography at home. Each mother can best lay out her own plan, according to her general knowledge and her children's needs. But she may put aside diffidence and hesitation and go on boldly with this work, because it affords her the largest latitude. Probably she will accomplish most when she thinks to do least.

CHAPTER XIV

Children's Literary Life

"Education is not an apprenticeship to a trade; it is the culture of moral and intellectual forces in the individual and in the race."—Fouillét.

AN extraordinary instance of what can be done by self-training, without the assistance of schools has just come under my notice. A young woman whom unfortunate family circumstances had caused to "tumble up" rather than to be rightly and regularly educated, passed her college entrance examinations with remarkable éclat, without any other preparation than her own earnest efforts could achieve. By pouring over elementary grammars and text books she gained enough knowledge of their contents in a single month to supplement the lack of years of consecutive study, and after having been but two years at school during the whole of her life she entered college and made all her terms

without any one suspecting the lack of systematic training that had preceded this final course.

This is not an example to be held up for emulation. It merely shows what concentration and earnestness can do, and incidentally, how much time is ordinarily wasted in long years of "college preparatory" reading. The girl in question came of a literary family; books were her playthings from infancy and she had absorbed the contents of a library without any formal study. Her mental energy was of a high order and she brought to each subject she attacked the ripe faculty of judgment and a memory not worn out by long years of drudging over unimportant details. "It is intellectual power that is transmitted from one generation to another," observed a French critic, "and not the knowledge acquired." But to all intents and purposes the inheritance of power is even better than a heritage of mere learning, since the important factor is undiminished energy, not out-of-date facts about living.

"Browsing in a library" did for Oliver Wendell Holmes what his Alma Mater could scarcely have accomplished alone. It gave him an unquenchable love of literature, apart from the mere technicality of book

work. And the two things are very different. The child who grows up looking upon books as things concealing lessons, who hears of Shakespeare and Tennyson for the first time from the lips of his teachers accompanied with admonishment about strict attention to the notes at the end of the volume, and who reads with an eye to examinations; gets almost none of the beauty out of the poems and less of the moral worth. But if he has been familiar with these poems from his earlier years, and learned to love them for their own sake, neither "notes" nor questions can dull his interest in them. And he will probably be in need of no such spur; where culture has entered into the blood medicaments have no work to do.

I have often been surprised at the slight knowledge average girls of the high school age have of general literature and how little their cursory reading helps out their course in the college preparatory studies. Between the English classics and what they usually call interesting books, obtained from the libraries and eagerly devoured for amusement, there is an immense gap. On the one side all the wealth of our rich literature, and on the other a sea of trash. No wonder that the business of reading the books required for

college is considered a heavy task, since there is so little preliminary training at home. In a normal education nearly all that is now "required" and "crammed" should have been slowly and unconsciously acquired in the course of a childhood passed in the atmosphere of books. Where the habit of referring to dictionary and encyclopedia to help out in difficulties has been the rule from infancy and where conversation in the home has been intelligent, the child does not have to be taught by his school teacher *how* to learn, and scarcely what to learn. When his interest in the subject on hand has once been excited he will work without needing to be driven along the path under the lash of a threatened "examination." He will work because he wants to know. And the only knowledge that stays by us is that which has been gained to satisfy our curiosity.

There are children who have an honest indifference to books, but want to know what is useful and necessary for their occupations. They will read when they want to find out facts bearing upon pursuits that interest them, such as machinery, electricity or some craft, but their enjoyment is in the fact mastered, not in the way it is presented. Books are their servants,

not their friends. That they thus miss the most intense pleasure in life is not a distress to such practical temperaments: frank, shrewd, bustling minds are these, to whom the universe is a mechanism and themselves mechanics. They are usually cheerful, insensible and self-satisfied, but not sympathetic nor winsome. Dearer by far is the creature who with all the faults, perhaps, of frequent impetuosity and inconsistency yet unites to capacity for action an enthusiasm for the ideal. Such an one will be estimable as a man, adorable as a woman and as a child at once perplexing and tantalizing, satisfactory and attractive.

The natural child has a vein of romance in him as the wild flower has a faint woodsy scent, unlike the perfume which is cultivated in garden blooms. His fancy dwells in a world where beauty is a right and love the law; he revels in the impossible, believes devoutly in the improbable and fixes his ambitions high above the power of mortal attainment. But if he did not, if he simply desired what is easy and common, he would win less from life than even the average man and woman do. It is by aiming high

that we get a little nearer a lofty mark than if we followed the level of our understanding.

Between the simplest child and the great genius is a natural sympathy and attraction. "And still to childhood's sweet refrain the heart of genius turns," sang Longfellow. The mind that is passionately sincere strikes fire from the child nature. Nothing is so repellant to it as an affectation. Few grown people know what literature they like until they have been told by somebody they respect what they ought to like. Their admiration or disapproval results from a deliberate deference to rules and standards, or, in the case of the uneducated, from that emotional stampede which draws an entire mass onward after a leader.

But children receive from their first acquaintance with a book the effect the author intended, free from the prejudice of contemporary opinion of its worth. The ideas they may form have the sincerity of a conviction reached by independent reasoning; more reliable than the impressions of adults who rarely approach a book with unbiased minds. And not only will an unsophisticated child pass judgment upon an

author according to his own impressions about him, but he will state these in a straightforward manner. He makes no apologies or explanations on finding a famous writer dull or a popular idol unnatural. It is instructive to hear the candid criticisms of a young, unspoiled mind, but an understanding which is wholly natural in its processes is not by any means characteristic of all children. Although there is a period in the life of every child when he is intellectually honest it is often brief; cut short by his introduction to school. Here the sharp edge of originality quickly grinds away against the machine constructed to turn individualities into averages.

So quick and sure is the change under school discipline from impulsive frankness to calculated effects, that I believe the data recently contributed by school libraries concerning children's literary tastes can scarcely be considered good evidence of their natural inclinations. It is the product of a cultivated soil, not a spontaneous growth. And the determination to accept these contributions as proofs of a child's mental bias reveals the prejudice in favor of engrafting adult opinions upon the tender shoots of young instinct which is constantly leading us away from a

real understanding of child nature. We cannot ascertain what a child thinks by starting out in our inquiry with a fixed idea of what he ought to think. Little is gained indeed, by attention to his purely mental processes even when they are honestly studied. We gain more by considering his emotional expressions.

I believe that every normal child has an instinctive appreciation of the good and the beautiful at least equal to the guiding light of our own adult experience. There is in fact, a curious likeness between the pure impulse of a simple understanding and the aspiration of a mind broadly cultured. A little child's estimate of literature which is at all within the realm of his comprehension is usually more than respectable; it is often acute, searching, just. What he likes is apt to have some claim to excellence, even if of a simple kind. And his dislike for complications closely resembles the preferences of truly esthetic minds for something that touches the heart.

Whoever will take the trouble to win the confidence of a child who is just beginning to get an acquaintance with literature, chiefly as yet, through having stories read to him, will probably find some positive

inclinations already aroused. Out of a dozen books one will be eagerly praised and others listened to with indifference. And although this indication of preference or aversion may seem like a caprice, study of the child's tastes in other matters will show that he has reasons for his criticisms. Cold, somber or subtle things do not attract him. It is his part, as a reader or listener, to respond, not to dig deep for hidden meanings, and art may ask much from his feelings but no new effort from his mind. The dividing line betwixt pain and pleasure is much sharper in youth than in maturity, and clearer, truer. Work is called work and play is known as play. A book that demands hard thinking cannot delude infantile fancy by any over-lapping pleasantry above dulness. The demand a child makes of a story is that it shall have vitality, warmth that can kindle interest. Humor, pathos or a lively bit of talk stir him more than older readers because his susceptibility has not been dulled by abuse.

There are children, I am told, who take a kind of pleasure in tickling their ears with the sound of rhythmical phrases; a baby of two years who listened with delight to Tennyson's "Sweet and Low," and

other precocious mites who sigh over "Thanatopsis," out these are rare infants. Most intelligent young people under a dozen years, when childish taste begins to change, have a hunger for what is vivid and present; choosing, if one may so phrase it, the legs of plain prose, not the wings of verse; liking rhyme very well but insisting on the story.

Folk lore makes no mistake and is permanently satisfying. "Mother Goose" holds her place in our nursery because in such thrilling narratives as "Little Jack Horner" and "Mary and the Lamb" there is an immediate answer to the child's wish for reality. A living person with an identifying name is at once projected on his attention. He is given a playmate. Then there is something given him to do that is both curious and interesting; something one would not mind doing one's self if the chance offered. The laugh comes with the discomfiture of somebody or something that is not especially cared for. Favorites must be protected and extricated from their difficulties before the tale ends, if there is to be peace.

There is a natural difference between the tastes of boys and girls. Boys want the excitement strong and sustained; girls prefer something more subtle.

They would have a heroine continually doing agreeable little things, like Miss Alcott's "Jo" who is, I believe, the most popular character in any book written for children. She is so altogether human; spicy yet high-minded, and above all, impulsive, like themselves. If we would get at the secret of what gives the charm to character I think it is this: the showing of lively impulse. A real child is always swayed by caprices, stopping scarcely one time out of a hundred to calculate and study consequences, and if he avoids all dangers it is after personal experiences has taught him what they mean. When an author presents a cool, far-sighted young creature who pauses before every attractive caper to decide whether he will get his feet wet or lose his chance of getting to heaven, one cannot blame a sensible reader for throwing down the book.

There are bits in some novels that children recognize as faithful paintings and like better than any tale written down to their understanding. Give them the school day experiences of Jane Eyre, the chapter from "The Caxtons" about Pisistratus and his flower pot, or that picturesque and too little known *genre* bit from Mrs. Stowe's "Poganuc People" where Dolly

goes to the illumination, if you would learn whether children appreciate excellence of description. Dickens' stories about "Poor Jo," Harry Walmers, Jr., and Little Em'ly, pleasantly narrated in the volume brought out by Dickens' daughter should be in the child's library. Every well read woman can however, make appropriate selections from the best authors to suit the taste of her little hearers. It is one of a mother's privileges to introduce her children in this manner to what is best in literature and not send them forth utterly undeveloped, to have their opinions formed by any teacher into whose charge they may happen to fall. "Education is rescuing children from the play of chance."

Old books, especially those meant for adults, contain treasures not to be found on modern juvenile book shelves. Indeed, the majority of books written for children are an affront to their taste. They are mostly fantastic, exaggerated and lacking in a true perception of child nature. They deal with life from the point of view of the adult trying to seem young, and have a sort of mocking humor that teases and revolts. An unsophisticated child dislikes magicians and goblins who talk satirically, animals that

philosophize, and young persons who are made to pose for the purpose of acting out the author's idea. To succeed with them a writer must be sincere and have no ulterior object in view. And this is why the child characters wrought by the masters strike the chord of youthful sympathy. They are usually written in the author's best and most earnest vein. When an author presents his hero or heroine as an infant he knows that he works to win or lose all. If he does not succeed in making him live all is over. We may waste one perusal on his book but we will not return to it. If readers universally abided by their better impulses there would be a great weeding out in our literary fields.

Mrs. Wiggins, who has done so much to protect children from misinterpretation, says:—"One of the vices of to-day is that we are publishing too many books for young people. The child's attention is being diverted from the best channels by the newspaper interest which the schools require. We are enveloping rather than developing the young mind. Here is my educational creed: Provide the best conditions for mental growth and then let the child do the growing."

This eminent author was one of the children who "browsed in a library"; reading in childhood such books as "Undine," "The Arabian Nights," "Scottish Chiefs," "Ivanhoe" and Thackeray's "Book of Snobs." "Gulliver was very real to me," she averred, "and I don't think I was the worse for not reading Shakespeare in expurgated editions. We expurgated as we read, child fashion, taking into our sleek little heads all that we could comprehend or apprehend and passing over what might have been hurtful at a later period. I suppose we failed to get a very close conception of Shakespeare's colossal genius but we did get a tremendous and lasting impression of force and power, life and truth."

It is a thousand times more important, this — than pedantical knowledge of every word the seventeenth century authors made classical. The telling truth Mrs. Wiggins lightly refers to, that when very young children get beauty and truth from literature, and slip over the allusions to evil that later on they will be curious about — is too little understood. I read Don Juan when I was but ten, and dreamed over the unparalleled grandeur of Byron's melancholy music. I swallowed whole such volumes as Chateaubriand's

Travels, passed a warm summer without fatigue by the help of a wonderful time-yellowed book entitled "Poets and Poetry of America," containing "The Culprit Fay" and many odes to Napoleon, and devoured without hindrance or check, between seven and seventeen many works of our greatest English writers, holding doctrines and anecdotes that were more than doubtful material for the reveries of maidens, but of which I kept only the beauty and remained entirely innocent of the vice.

The child does cull sensibly if he is allowed a free hand. He chooses the volume which strikes a true note; that appeals both to his imagination and to his sense of reality at the same time. He likes realism in romance. This may be why Grimm's Tales are usually preferred to later embroideries upon the plain old reel of simple folk lore. The desire to continue adventures of a favorite hero leads the child to love long stories, related in sections, and continued for many sequent days. If he could be made sufficiently attractive there is a possibility that a single hero would last a child during the term of his nursery existence. Such a character is the worthy Tuflongo, in Holme Lee's Fairy Tales. In an

obscure corner among some old papers I found the other day that ancient volume, worth from its associations, more than its weight in gold to me. On the day that my eyes opened to the light of this world my mother, whose imaginative nature bordered upon superstition, recalled a certain legend to the effect that if a book, a ring and a piece of money were placed within the reach of the new-born infant its choice would show its future destiny. If the money was touched it would become rich; if the ring a happy marriage was presaged, while the selection of the book foretold a literary career. My father, in the gratification of this whim added romance to it by purchasing a new book for the occasion. It was Holme Lee's Fairy Tales, a thick book in a bright red and gold binding, fatally attractive; and the blind, misguided baby put its wavering little hand on the volume, thereby sealing its fate, as well as establishing an inalienable right to its first lawful piece of property.

The plaything of my first year, the victim of my early *penchant* for pencil marking and the treasure of my whole childhood, this old book has served me many a good turn, and perhaps — who knows? — an

ill turn or so in its time. I learned to read in it, and learned too, from it, to live for half the time in a beautiful ideal world where virtue and happiness went hand in hand and where "love was law."

There are worse things than a vein of romance. It naturally thins to a mere thread as we grow old, but in early life it should be a full, abounding current, influencing to some extent all the thoughts and acts of youth. An old French proverb says, "A door must be either open or shut." And a child must be one of two things; credulous, confiding, hopeful, or else sordid and distrustful. Shall we wish our little ones prematurely worldly wise?

It is a fair and happy period where the boy and girl meet each other's eyes frankly and squabble and make up in true brotherly and sisterly fashion. Out on some haunt in the woods wanders one of those girls whom Mrs. Stowe says are happy with "three apples and a book," and with her a frank, saucy boy, intent on fishing but with a weather eye to teasing. He too, has a book in his pocket; a Life of Somebody, and he and she exchange confidences, and thrill mutually over the heroic deeds of Cœur de Lion and Lloyd Garrison. Their mingled enthusiasms kindle

feelings that even after dying down a little, leaves something which makes future trust in human goodness easier and heroism possible. Who shall say from what secret source of memory is drawn that power to endure and suffer for faith and freedom that makes our boy and girl go gayly forth to hard duties when country and humanity call? Only lately a thrill went through many of us when a well-known woman whose beauty and social power had made themselves felt on two continents quietly renounced every privilege of her position to become a nurse to lepers. But yesterday we unfurled our flags and scattered flowers over the biers of a score of young soldiers who were the pioneers in a dangerous campaign against a threatening foreign foe. Does this spirit spring up in a night, like a mushroom? Impossible. It takes years of up-lifting fancies and thoughts to make a hero. But the most potent factor in a good life — after a good mother — is good literature. Surround the child from infancy with books that contain the great lessons of life; that thrill with earnestness and enthusiasm; that are vigorous and deep and call for response from his mind. To the child who opens his mind to the deep

truths of poetry, which is the forerunner of science, life looks simple and easy, and he learns to attach himself to duty before duty assumes that complicated and distasteful aspect it often presents later on. It is the child who is averse to books, who is inimical to study, that is the intractable child, who rebels against law and order because his nature is inharmonious with its own laws. Books in themselves — mere print and paper — are only trash except as they are symbols of the life of thought and imagination. But in our day they are symbols almost inseparable from it. And so the child who naturally forms an early friendship for books shows that the trend of his mind is upward, along the higher paths of life.

A child's literary life is a secret no adult can ever wholly penetrate. If he seldom talks of what he reads he thinks the more. The memories garnered from his reading enter into his dreams, and pursue him when awake. His development is helped on perhaps more by his voluntary reading than by any formal studies. But the mother may tactfully guide his taste often without his knowledge, by speaking in praise of fine books. There should be within easy reach, such attractive volumes as Arabella Buckley's " Fairyland

of Science," for children over seven; and Hawthorne's Wonder Book must be in every home. But even without any book especially adapted to his age a child will find nourishment for his taste in bits culled from great authors. The time to cultivate literary taste in children is before they can read. Stories told by the mother or father, when the little ones are cuddled about their knees in the twilight are the treats which young things look forward to with the greatest pleasure. One of the prettiest sights in the world is a flock of bright, eager children gathered around some gentle, sympathetic woman who has forgotten all her cares and important duties to enter into their enjoyment. It is surprising that mothers ever neglect this function of story-telling, which is one of the best means of impressing important lessons. A "ballad-making" parent holds his child a willing captive and although he may sometimes feel, as Emerson says, that he "is the slave of his power," and wish he had less gift of entertaining, he can teach his audience moderation in its demands.

A child will concede almost anything for the sake of that charming hour "in the gloaming" when he is taken a journey into fancy's kingdom and made

to forget all his little troubles and disappointments. Story-telling is doubtless, a natural gift, but it can be cultivated, and the result is well worth effort. There are numbers of books at hand nowadays, furnishing the outline of classical tales, which the mother can glance over and master easily. Her personality is an essential quantity in the fascination of the twilight hour tales, though, and the more she can infuse herself into her stories the better they will be liked. Even after they read a good deal for themselves children prefer to hear tales related by a living voice. They take to books for company when the more vivid presence of loved friends is lacking. But once interested in a favorite volume society solicits them in vain. The true book-lover becomes immersed — buried, and has to be dug out with hoes! But one should be cautious of interrupting a vision of the beautiful by the intrusion of rougher actualities; when the reader is young. Subtle influences of potent worth may be at work within them. Most of us who have lived much with books are influenced more than we should probably like to acknowledge by reminiscences of our childish literary life.

CHAPTER XV

Foreign Languages

"Conversation has always been considered by the great educators the best means of instructing children; especially in languages. Socrates, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Fellenburg and many others have been earnest advocates of it. It is above all, in the family that this method is useful as a means of preparing children for classical studies, and for giving them fluency in living tongues."— Marcel.

IT is of inestimable advantage to any one to grow up knowing two languages so well that he can at will pass from one to the other, without the necessity of conscious translation from his mother tongue into that which is the less native. It is almost like possessing a spiritual passport that might enable the intelligence to take a vacation whenever it desired an extension of its experiences. Apart from its practical value to those who are to pursue commercial careers, or to the traveler, the complete possession of one or more foreign languages is an ex-

tension of mental power that no one can afford to neglect. A mere "smattering" of a language is entirely useless as an aid to intellectual development, and the complete acquaintance with one implies such facility that one may express all his thoughts in it with as much readiness as he can in his mother tongue.

How many of our young people grow up with this mastery of the French, German or Spanish over which from five to ten years are usually spent during their school and college years? They may, after great effort and much drudgery get a reading knowledge of these foreign languages; more rarely, a writing knowledge. But it is seldom indeed, that the knowledge includes the ability to converse fluently or to *think* in it. Mastery of a foreign language cannot be got from text-books. One must live in the atmosphere, work, play and breathe in it just as he has done with his mother tongue, before it enters into his composition and becomes an integral part of his existence.

The idea of using text-books to impart a knowledge of languages is a pedantical method which was first adopted by a set of monks; the Jansenists

of Port Royal; and has come down to us. But it has been meeting with disfavor for a long time, and will, it is to be hoped, sometime be superseded by the original method of the living voice of the teacher. In the more cultured families among us there is often a singular neglect of languages as a part of education. They are regarded as the special office of the school, where there is a great show made of teaching them. How thoroughly this is done may be inferred from such circumstances as this: In Paris I met at a certain *pension,* or boarding house, about thirty young women from all parts of the world, but especially from America, who after graduating from our large colleges, were beginning at the beginning as pupils at the "École Internationale" to learn French. Not one could speak the tongue studied for from five to seven years, and scarcely one could read the simplest book without the help of a dictionary. At St. Germaine I encountered a melancholy Harvard student going through the same routine by himself, to supplement the deficiencies of his early training! Everywhere throughout Europe one meets Americans struggling with tongues which they are supposed to have studied long and seriously, but with

which they have no intimate acquaintance. After years of delving through grammatical rules the traveler is forced to turn to an interpreter to explain the simplest facts relating to everyday needs. Nor is this lamentable deficiency singular to English speaking people. In France English is very poorly taught in the schools and only those children who have English governesses learn anything at all of our tongue. And in English boarding schools a two years' term is considered insufficient to get even the slightest reading and writing knowledge of the English tongue studied at home since infancy! Because it is taught from books. A French girl of my acquaintance who has had excellent advantages, finished by two years at a celebrated English school and cannot write a note of one page in English without making errors a six-year-old child laughs at. But during our own residence at Paris I had the good fortune, in an exchange of conversation with a French girl, to give her a start in English that enabled her to go on easily after we left there, although she had perhaps less than thirty lessons. I took with her the real kindergarten method, talking about objects around us, and passing gradually to other matters;

not undertaking to confuse her understanding by immediate reference to "the knife of the gardener's son." Yet some rules of grammar did come in incidentally, and were remembered as being explanations of certain "drolleries" of the singular English language.

The kindergarten method is the right one; even when the pupils have reached an advanced age. In learning a language we must all go back to childhood. Is it not then, a singular absurdity to teach children by methods that are too advanced for the adult who is a beginner? Language is an outcome of man's emotional nature and is not to be acquired by an effort of the intellect working by itself. Grammar, the colorless reflection of speech, may be coolly studied, but to know grammar is not to know how to talk but how *not* to talk. It no more imparts the power of expression than knowledge of the chemical properties of colors makes an artist. After some facility of expression has been gained it is desirable to begin the study of grammar, if French or German are being studied, because these languages depend upon grammar for correctness of construction much more than our own tongue does. But the grammars

should be of the most primary character and *written in the language that is being studied.* It is a monstrous error to study any foreign grammar written in the mother tongue.

No one should be appalled by this statement and anticipate insuperable difficulties in the way of home instruction of children in foreign languages. If French is to be taught, buy at any French book store, or send to Paris and get it, the "Premiére Année de Grammaire" published by Librarie Armand Colin, and use it as an aid to the conversations about grammar. Conversation, and above all, conversation, is the essential method of instruction. Consider the method of Nature with her children. In the first place, we perceive, then we want, and express our wish; then, we claim what we want. First observation, then emotion, lastly, expansion of our ideas. In the most primitive stage the language is wholly that of emotion, and is conducted by gestures. Therefore, in teaching children, make use of gestures to help out. Little songs, accompanied by gestures, little games that are actively spoken, fix words in the minds of the players. Out of feeling springs expression as flowers grow from the vital substance in

the plant. The more intense our feeling the more vivid and picturesque our expression. In building up a method for the learning of a foreign language we must analyze the way we learned our mother tongue and proceed along similar lines. That was the vehicle of our earliest wants and thoughts; similarly, the newer tongue must first endeavor to depict our simpler wishes and ideas, gradually progressing to those that are more complicated.

One of the most absurd things ever attempted was setting children to learn languages from books. Even the conning of words was stupid enough, but when it came to memorizing rules of syntax, the divergence from common sense was at its highest point of departure. Yet what countless thousands are still pursuing this road to nowhere! And how disregarded are the warnings of those who like Monsieur Gouin, relate their sorry experiences of the classical methods of learning a language and advise the abandonment of books and the use of a system that is in accord with Nature. Against a deeply rooted prejudice our mighty philosopher, Herbert Spencer, made but little headway, when he showed the world its error, half a century ago. But the labors of Jacotot,

Gouin and Marcel have prepared the way for the adoption of a rational method; and although it is little known or practised now, there is hope that in time it will entirely drive out the classical or monkish method.

Monsieur Marcel, whose clear and concise little manual on "The Study of Languages" well translated lately, should be read by every mother, divides his method into two parts; the *practical,* which associates ideas and their signs directly, as when a child plays in German and French with native nurses and so acquires both languages at the same time that he learns to speak his mother tongue from his parents; and the *comparative,* where a foreign language is learned by translating the signs of our native tongue into the strange one. The first plan he thinks the only proper one for young persons under twelve; while the second, calling for judgment and reflection, is an aid to the mental development of riper years. The practical method is however, in my opinion, not only superior to translation, but is the only way that a foreign language can be learned so as to afford a ready means of communication with

others, or the power of expressing one's own thoughts through written words.

When an adult and a child visit a foreign country the little one learns to speak the new language far more rapidly than his older fellow student because he gets his knowledge at first hand; not by saying to himself for instance, that a certain word in German stands for a certain word in English, but that *das Kind* is himself, *der Hut* the thing upon his head, and so on. His mother meanwhile, labors by the comparative method to think from one set of symbols into another set, instead of immediately associating objects and their symbols.

The child's way is the living way, the other a colorless imitation. Translating has so long been the regular routine, that many persons are shocked by the suggestion of discarding it in favor of the apparently puerile method of Nature. How pernicious the translation method ordinarily is has been proved to me by many instances of children losing all interest in foreign languages after some drudgery at this dull work. One child who had lived abroad long enough to become proficient in French — speak-

ing, reading and writing it quite well at twelve years, not only lost all her fluency after four years at an American high school, where she was put in the advanced class and set to translating, but acquired such a distaste for the language she constantly heard mutilated that she can now scarcely be persuaded to read a line or speak a word of the tongue that was once as familiar to her as her mother tongue.

A reading acquaintance with a language can be gained by translating, or the comparative system. But even here its inferiority is evident. How slow and tedious is our progress when every sentence in a book must be re-thought in our own tongue. And what proportion of men and women who have studied languages by the classical method in their youth are able after leaving school, to read the literature of those languages fluently enough to enjoy it?

As a means of mental discipline translating has its advantages. Classical teachers deny that the natural sciences have an equal claim. But no humanist however enthusiastic over study for its own sake, will refuse to admit that the professed object of studying a foreign language is to learn it; and if it can be learned better by one system than another, the prac-

tical plan should be chosen. Now, the only practical plan is to *live* the language we wish to learn. To act through it, think in it, understand by it and speak it until it has become dissolved in our blood and is as much part of us as our mother tongue. One language learned thus is worth for mental discipline twenty gotten superficially. Under exceptionally favorable circumstances, as when several languages are spoken in a family which is composed of two or three nationalities, it is possible to learn all of them very well. But only persons with a special gift for languages ever get a thorough knowledge of more than two. And for all practical purposes, as well as for mental discipline, two are enough.

An allusion must here be made to the exceeding carelessness and short-sightedness of parents about one matter. I know many Germans living in New York who send their children to American schools, anxious that they should learn their adopted tongue, but absolutely neglectful of the privilege that is easily within their reach of mastering two languages consecutively, through home conversation in German. Some parents who speak German between themselves always speak broken English when talking with their

children! It is incredible that when it is so difficult to learn a language through the medium of school instruction that so ready a means of acquiring mastery of both the inherited tongue and the adopted one should be neglected.

I know one little girl of ten whose acquaintance with three languages was a marvelous thing to her teachers and playmates. Of Dutch origin, she had learned that tongue in infancy from her parents; then, her grandmother being German, she had acquired a good knowledge of that language through constant association with her. But she had also, lived some years in France and had gone to school there, so she could speak and read French with facility. Entering an American school at the age of ten, and keeping up, in obedience to her wise parents, her acquaintance with the tongues learned in her early childhood, she was able to add English to her former languages without any trouble at all, and in a couple of years spoke it without any objectionable accent. This shows what may be done by using the proper means with young children of mixed races. It is much easier for the child of parents who have come to America from foreign lands to recollect their na-

tive tongue and acquire English than to learn their mother speech afterwards, as a foreign language. This truism should not need to be said, but it is so ignored that it is necessary to impress upon parents their absurdity in sending their children to school here to learn from books their native — or that which is native to their parents — speech. I have known this to be done in many instances. Some young women whose father was a learned German physician, and never, during his thirty years in this country, forgot his native accent, absolutely sent his three daughters to a German tutor when they were grown, to learn in a class composed of Americans, the tongue that should have been theirs by heritage.

If a child acquires German or French before he is twelve he may then give a couple of years to the study of Latin in the preparatory school, and if he has the good fortune to learn it as he should, as a living language, he will know it pretty well by that time. According to the old-fashioned method it will take him seven years to get even the slightest reading knowledge of it. The term "dead language" is a strange misnomer. If it is dead it is no longer a language, any more than a corpse is a person. Were

I to undertake to teach Greek, of which I know nothing, I should take my young pupil to Athens and accompany him in his sports with his young comrades, so that what we both learned together we might practise with ease and naturalness. There are a few schools where Latin and Greek are taught as living tongues, and under gifted, enthusiastic teachers the pupils make almost incredible progress. The German professors have the advantage over us in a corps of thoroughly trained special teachers, but before long we shall probably equal them in this respect.

It is an open question whether study of the classics for the general student is worth while. Spencer and Bain say not. But Monsieur Fouillet utters these trenchant words: "If boys, on leaving the lyceum, forgot all their Greek and Latin immediately, the cerebral development and the tendencies acquired would be enough to prove the utility of classical studies." But in any event, the classics should not be entered upon before the thirteenth year, and may be learned in school; unless one of the parents chooses to take the trouble to dig up his neglected lore and be the assistant of his young son or daughter. My own mother who had been an excellent

Greek scholar in her youth, could not recall more than enough to start me on the alphabet when it came my turn to learn! And I know one very studious girl who lived the life of an anchorite for five years to keep at the head of her class in Greek, but who, after passing her examination, straightway proceeded to bury all her knowledge of Greek fathoms deep under more useful things, so that within a year she could scarcely construe one page of the "dead tongue." I cannot think as Fouillet does, that so much effort and so little result is worth while. For mental discipline I believe that the *thorough* knowledge of a living language, like German, French or Italian, is more than equivalent to years of drudgery in Greek which is to be forgotten at once after passing an examination.

The case is different with Latin, of which every educated person must possess some knowledge. Unfortunately very few parents recollect enough of their badly learned classical language to impart it to their children. We must as a rule, depend upon the schools. But modern languages are essentially the business of home teachers, for they are to be learned by the comparative method, that is, by object teach-

ing instead of text-books. From four to say, ten years, the child is at its best period for learning languages by the natural method. If the mother is not proficient in French or German she will do well to call in native tutors, insisting upon object teaching, and attending the lessons in order to see that her ideas are carried out. At certain hours *every* day — for it is highly important that no lapses occur, the mind easily taking on the habit of looking for certain activities at regular hours daily, and lending itself to them with pleasure — there may be "French plays" or "German plays" which consist in banishing English for the time and carrying on the games entirely in the foreign tongue. The child learns phrases by the help of gestures and accents; the new language appeals to him in the same way that his native one does, through his emotions, and the great object is gained that his ear gets trained and he understands it when spoken. We say that we wish our child to learn to speak French, but that amounts to nothing unless he can understand it when others speak it. We must recollect that the most important point is to train the *ear* and not the eye; for it is the ear which is the organ of understanding language.

And one of the prime difficulties of an adult who tries to read French or German after a course of classical instruction in them is that he *sees* word but does not feel them as he would if he had learned his language orally. They should be vibrant and full of melody, just as English is to him. There must be no sense of a medium between the author and himself; they should be *en rapport*. Facility in reading can scarcely be gained until at least twenty volumes have been carefully read.

I had a happy experience once in giving children active lessons in French. It was down in Virginia, in that region Amelie Rives has made classic, the old county of Albemarle, where when it rains, the entire soil becomes a river of red mud, and people must find occupation within door for consecutive afternoons during rainy spells. There were six children in the house, and it rained hard. I coaxed an obliging young woman to play light airs on the piano, and getting all the youngsters together, taught them some calisthenics in "Grace," with the explanations given entirely in French. The motions were gone over several times, always accompanied by the same words, until even the dullest had them impressed on his

brain. Then we played games in the big hall, and spoke our directions for "cache-cache"— I spy — and other simple little games entirely in French. It was all a lively play, with no mention of intended instruction, but the children learned all the numbers, up to twenty, in a couple of afternoons, besides many words and several phrases. Was not that quick work?

As soon as the child becomes somewhat familiar with the language we are teaching him through play, we should begin to read simple tales to him; prose rather than poetry. The same tale may be read over and over again, for children are, happily, pleased with repetition. When they know the little story we may have them tell it to us in their own words. We may adroitly direct their attention to the verb rather than to the substantive, getting them to describe action rather than things. For the verb is the objective point of that language and to know a single one so thoroughly as to be able to apply it in every admissible way is better than to commit to memory any number of nouns.

For children who had gained a fair acquaintance with the tongue in question I devised something that

had excellent results. There were but two of us together at one time, as the idea was scarcely applicable to more. We took turns in reading from a well written French book of fiction, in which there was a good deal of conversation, and each was provided with note-book and pencil. As one read, at first slowly, the other jotted down rapidly, all the words she could catch, the reader never pausing to repeat or give any light on obscure points. The reporter had to do just the best she could to get her phrases as they fell from the reader's lips. Then she in turn, took the book and became the reader, reading the same page that had been read to her while the other wrote down rapidly all she heard. Then, the same page was read by each in turn, but more rapidly. The third time it was read it was read as fast as a person ordinarily speaks and the reporter had to stir herself to get down the phrases, as she had not the privilege of referring to what she had previously written but was obliged to depend entirely upon her memory and ear.

The competition was lively, and each became very ambitious to excel in this reporting business. As the book was interesting, we did not weary of it until it had been pretty well exhausted as a

medium of study, and as we were obliged to continually think in the tongue we were using, English being thrown almost aside even in our minds during this lively work, wonderful facility resulted in the use of French in the course of one winter. But the difficulty with a language as with music and painting, is that it cannot be neglected with impunity. Practice must be assiduous and faithful, for the lapse of a few months makes a sensible falling off in fluency and knowledge.

However, there is one comfort; knowledge once acquired can be renewed at but little expense of brain power. Persons have been known to recall a language once known but long since forgotten, after many years of disuse, when mingling with people of the race among whom the tongue is spoken. And there are singular instances of a long-forgotten language coming back to a dying person; showing that what the brain has once carefully registered stays there; although a life of occupations leading apart from the accomplishment appears to have completely driven it away.

CHAPTER XVI

Accomplishments

"But if all the useless ornaments of our life are to be cut off in the process of adaptation, evolution would empoverish instead of enriching our nature."— George Santayana.

IN the days when there was a wide swath between education for girls and for boys, it was the custom for parents to be ambitious of making their daughters "accomplished" women. A little music, a little painting, a little knowledge of embroidering and burnt wood work entered into the equipment of all gently-bred girls. But colleges opened their doors to women; Vassar was built; new ideals sprang to life in the breasts of mothers; their daughters were to be trained for life, not merely varnished and finished. And all the softer pleasures of the intelligence were kicked out of sight by the hoof of sport.

For it is necessary for minds that work hard to

relax in some way. Recreation is a recognized factor in health. After many hours spent indoors it seemed the only rational course for girls to go to the golf-fields, to the tennis courts, to the archery fields and basket-ball grounds and spend all the time they could spare in active exercise in the open. This sane practice has given us a new race of women; hardy, fearless, practical and — wholly opposed to sentiment in every form. No one is more appreciative of the splendid physical endowments of modern American women than I. Reared in boy-fashion myself, while very young, that period of "running wild" probably tided over much subsequent imprudent bookishness later on; and I wish that the out-door life had lasted for a much longer time. Yet, may there not be an excess of physical recreation in a girl's training? If, for the sake of our general evolution, we are forced to "cut off all useless ornaments" as Santayana says, will we not lose something precious out of life?

Sport is a delightful and exhilarating pastime; yet the mind does not particularly benefit by it. Mental recreation is necessary for the complete development of our nature, and nothing affords a better variation

of intellectual occupations than what are called accomplishments. It is said that a man is better for a hobby of some sort; likewise, a woman is much the better for an accomplishment. A cultivated taste for a fine art is a resource against dulness and unrest; it keeps the heart sound and satisfied, the mind sane and well poised. Parents should not then, cut off accomplishments from their schedule of education, but ought to give a child every opportunity to practise such a safe and agreeable mental game as an outlet to emotional energy. Making education wholly "practical" and conducive to the work of life stifles instincts that break out later on in various sorts of wild excesses. As mechanical musical instruments replace the harp, piano and violin; and moving picture shows replace home entertainments that require mental effort, so in proportion will "feminism" drive out those old-fashioned womanly graces that once made home a place to be remembered with tenderness, and family relations something indescribably sacred.

A number of years ago there appeared in a popular magazine one of those cartoons which by a few bold strokes depict the folly of an epoch. It represented a poor woman on her knees scrubbing the kitchen

floor while in the parlor her pretty daughter practised her voice to the accompaniment of the piano. In the mother's uplifted eyes, gleaming out of a wrinkled, care-worn face, was an expression of pride and satisfaction; by self-immolation she had made her daughter a lady. Was it such absurd travesties upon proprieties as this that brought upon music as an accomplishment the reproach that it is a mere pandering to the vanity and idleness of young women who do not choose to be useful? There is a terrible excess in natural readjustments of social follies, and education suffers for every craze that takes possession of the public. What is right and proper in itself falls into disfavor through the stupidity of those who do not know how to be moderate in anything.

Now, wherever the parents' position justify such a course — but not otherwise — children should be taught music, dancing, painting and kindred accomplishments as an essential part of their home training. Education has doubtless been improved to some extent by making it conduce to knowledge bearing upon the kind of careers that are in view for young persons, but too much zeal here inevitably leads to an oversight in another place; the proper outlet

for emotion. Concentration only upon the objective side of living will develop in our young people a kind of ruggedness similar to that of plants whose blossoms are continually cut off by the gardener so that their whole vitality may be given to growth. They present a fine appearance of health and strength but no suggestion of that grace and beauty that accompany a fulfilment of the function that is at once tender and potent, delicate yet eternal; the stretching out of fibers toward that spiritual realm where sentiment and feeling make the joy of life.

If adjustment to the ends we are trying to realize in this scientific age compels the surrender of everything not distinctly useful, we shall become erelong a poverty-stricken nation despite our vast material wealth. The fine arts cannot flourish in an atmosphere of bustle; the finer feelings develop best where there is leisure to throw out those little mental tendrils which cling about old associations and traditions. Much to be pitied is the man or woman who because of too great devotion to the practical has lost the faculty of meditation on the beautiful. Who can define the limits to the happiness occasioned by the merely picturesque?

Too much earnestness drives one mad. Let us then, admit recreation into our lives as a recognized necessity; not merely physical recreation, which repays us for our time in relays of health, quite as tangible as any other purchasable article, but mental recreation, which is the satisfaction of impulses reaching out toward the beautiful in nature and art. We need frequent transitions from big tasks to little ones, from those that exercise reason to those which make distinct call upon the imagination. We gain in cultivating as accomplishments those things we may never be able to do very well, but like to do. The ambition to excel does not then draw heavily upon our resources, limiting the free sweep of our enjoyment. The sense of not being too serious is an agreeable variety.

There is a tendency at present to pretend that everything must have an excuse for being; that it must make money or bring health. We dance because it is a fine exercise; motor because being in the air is excellent for the nerves; sing to expand the lungs; go to moving picture shows to get information about countries we have not visited. It is not frank; this disguise of preference. We do all these things

because we crave amusement; because they seem to us agreeable things to do. If passing a little time at home in the occupations which are now out of favor could be made popular we should once more see young persons going about with sketch books under their arms in summer, and hear a little music and conversation at home in the evenings; perhaps even have some moderate dancing in our own little drawing rooms instead of a mad stampede to cabarets; with consequences that threaten the foundations of society.

Let us nourish our children's souls. By the expenditure of a little time and money we can develop their natural tendencies along the line of musical and artistic expressions so that their minds may expand harmoniously, not grow up dwarfed and imperfect. If our girl has no decided talent for music we should not enforce the harsh decree that excludes music entirely from her education, should she like to learn something of the piano or violin. Only positive aversion ought to excuse her from some application to an art that will be a resource to her; if not an occupation bringing in return in money or fame. Every creature has need of the privilege of making

a little melody. A small voice may give happiness to its possessor; a little flexibility of finger comfort her when loneliness or misfortune overtake her. The person who adds to his vocation in life an avocation, becomes independent of the world.

In a good scheme of education there is a full and complete preparation for life's serious labor kept constantly in view, and also, indulgence of the tastes and inclinations that brighten life. Accomplishments have the same relation to the mind that pets do to the affections. They keep up kindly currents of feeling that conduce to the welfare of the whole nature, and without which we are hirelings to life's business; joylessly fulfilling a prescribed task.

In the arts as in science, the beginning is everything. A bad beginning may do more damage than can be later on repaired by a fine master. If it can possibly be done, have the child who is to learn to play the piano, be under the instruction of a real artist in music for the first year; preferably a woman. The primary object is not *technique;* that will come later on, if there is enough taste in the pupil to justify a long and severe training; the primary object is development of a love for melody, as opposed to

noise. The natural instinct of the child will lead him to play "tunes." Let him. But teach him to make the tunes true to their measure of time and pitch. Make him familiar from the beginning, with the principle that music is a measuring of sounds, so that certain spaces intervene between them; that unless the right spaces interpose the result is unbearable noise. Is this often explained to the child who is required to "keep time" as a task? It was not explained to me by the stiff English governess who kept my young body in prison on a hard stool while she droned out her everlasting and meaningless —"one, two, three, four," until I nearly lost all my natural love for music under the infliction of "keeping time."

But the child who is made to understand that time-keeping means measuring distance between sounds will become interested in following out a principle that brings results. Give it an example between something drummed out regardless of harmony and the same thing measured; there can scarcely fail to be an appreciation of the difference. If there is we must infer a lamentable absence of correctness of ear. A poor ear can be cultivated, however, where there

is present a real taste for music. When that too, is absent, one must decide whether any amount of musical education is worth while, or whether efforts should not be directed toward some other form of art.

While there ought to be opportunity given for some knowledge of all the arts, time and energy should be chiefly spent on that especial one for which an early liking is shown. No child should be made an intellectual prisoner. Seven years is about the right age to begin piano lessons and an hour each day is as much as ought to be required for practise. If the mother is herself a good musician there is no better or more patient instructor; yet, the more of an artist she is the less likely is she to give the lessons willingly. Perhaps she may be able to effect the exchange of lessons with another mother, helping an advanced pupil in return for primary instruction for her own daughter, for it is notable that those who are gifted in music detest the drudgery of teaching the young. Happily, there are born teachers, in music as in other branches, so that one can scarcely fail to find the right teacher. It is really important that the beginner should be well taught. I have seen too many instances of wasted time and money on poor teachers not to advo-

cate this most earnestly. Of all things *expression* should be sought in the beginning. When there is no technique to make sounds melodic, the dependence must be placed upon feeling. Even a simple exercise can be played by a young child so as to be agreeable to people, if she has learned to put into it the expression native to its spirit. Consequently, we may discourage pounding on keys and unsympathetic rendering of airs, even when the child is at a very tender age. The object is music; not noise.

Dancing is now "a craze." It is scarcely necessary to suggest that it be taught to children. But there are right and wrong ways. One of the sanest is the method that prevails in the smaller towns of France, where little classes are organized for afternoon dancing two afternoons a week, and the mothers or chaperons sit along the wall watching, while a couple of teachers put the little girls and boys through their steps to the music of a piano exceedingly well played by the third assistant. It is simply an informal little ball, amusing and innocent, affording opportunities for companionship of a peaceable and well-bred character, with a good deal of sensible instruction thrown in. The French dances,— the

" Berlin," the " minuet " and the world-known " lancers " are very pretty; but the adaptation of our " Boston " is less happy, being a sort of wild jump, after a fashion that is called the " American method." We do not like to own it.

Dancing may be taught in small classes, better than in large ones, and every neighborhood should have its organized class for children, at prices low enough to allow every one to become a member. Unfortunately, prices for good instruction are often prohibitive. In that case, the mother who knows how to dance pretty well, should invite some other little ones to share the privilege of her own child, and give them all home lessons at least twice a week. Make it a little afternoon function, with light refreshments afterwards. No child under the age of twelve years should be allowed to go to a dance held after night-fall. I state this with more rigor than I usually state any suggestion, for most parents are now relaxing the old sane rule for young people of " early to bed and early to rise," and letting them stay up until all sorts of hours. It is why so many of our young girls look faded at sixteen and our boys take to cigarettes to " calm their nerves." If only we could get ourselves

to emulate the fashion of our sensible German friends who make the afternoons the time for recreation, and sit out in gardens during the early evenings, sending their children to bed when the lights are lit. Not the American Germans, however, who have learned our ways.

In a recent book [1] I have described children's entertainments, especially lawn parties, which are among the pleasantest of summer recreations for young people, and ought to be more popular among us. They are exceedingly popular in France.

[1] Novel Ways of Entertaining, by Florence Hull Winterburn. Harper & Brothers, New York. Price $1.00 net.

CHAPTER XVII

Infant Politicians

"Complete living is the aim of all education."— Trumbull.

THERE is always a great run on packing boxes at the time of an election. The boys want them for bonfires. All the months during which the heads of families are soberly laying in additions to their stock of fixed opinions and theories by the aid of their favorite newspapers our boys are making secret preparations for a timely outburst of enthusiasm. The zeal they display in collecting barrels and other lumber, the parsimony with which they hoard and the ingenuity with which they secrete their ill-gotten plunder are simply astounding to older heads.

I watched from my window lately the making of a prodigious bonfire to celebrate the last presidential election. A swarm of boys, ranging from four to eighteen, buzzed back and forth from the middle of

the street to the rear cellar of a corner grocery kept by the father of one of the young patriots. Each time a pair of panting fellows emerged bearing aloft a huge hogshead or pile of boxes they were greeted with a triumphant shout, and twenty hands assisted in hurling their burden into the center of a pyre which was already sending what seemed a dangerous column of smoke toward the heavens. The supply of fuel was apparently inexhaustible and the fun grew madder each instant. Joining hands the youthful fire-fiends were dancing around and almost into the fire when a giant policeman hove in sight with all canvas spread and a howl of indignation. Presto! The entire street was alive with little flying figures, and the cry of "Ginger!" echoed from one end of the block to the other, as the youngsters scurried about, watching the officer's attempts to put out the conflagration, throwing an occasional box under his very nose, and uttering groans or shouts as the policeman or the flame appeared to be momentarily in the ascendant. The end did not come for a long hour and when the representative of law and order finally stamped on a handful of embers and turned away — the fire was re-kindled within ten minutes.

"Boys will be boys!" ejaculated indulgent onlookers; and there is no possible way to keep youngsters from celebrating great occasions in their own particular fashion. They *will* steal grocers' barrels and boxes and they *will* defy parental and official authority when their time comes, and devote the whole of their little souls to "painting the town red."

The truth is some laws are meant to be broken, for Solon, who knew how to make the laws which "were not the best he could devise but the best that Athens could bear" was dust and ashes at that prejudiced epoch when America borrowed from her Saxon forebears some good and other absurd regulations for the everlasting discomfort of her states. The lawyer clan study that they may help us escape penalties of a code too strict in many things. Not long since I heard the son of a great corporation lawyer explain that his father wished him to study law so that he might help the firm when his time came — to "get along easy." This is more serious, but the children are not far wrong in believing that at times of great national excitement a little rioting will not be charged against them very heavily by the elders who themselves go about on election nights

tooting horns and springing watchmen's rattles. Next day these playthings are contemptuously thrown aside and the fathers go to their business with customary sobriety. A president is elected; one party is satisfied, the other accepts defeat philosophically; the country settles down, and the children go back to their lessons. But nobody questions them as to the meaning of last night's frolic; nobody uses it to impress on them their own future responsibility in government.

It is incomprehensible how parents can let slip such favorable opportunities to instruct their children in fundamental matters, ordinarily tame and dull to their young spirits, but at such instants thrilling with interest. The time to impress any lesson in morals is at the moment that the child is awake to the idea of morality and its significance; not at those other periods when he is indifferent to any aspect of the question. With great adroitness and tact should general ideas be suggested, and then left to ripen in the hearers' minds. Most of the very slight political education children receive at home consists in disconnected prejudices about individuals. They believe that certain men are "bad for the country"

and others "good." Why or wherefore they could not possibly explain excepting that "father says so." They are seldom given precepts of conduct, founded upon sociological laws, and aided to solve problems for themselves. In this respect how inferior is our method of training from that of the ancient Persians! Xenophon's history of the education of the boy Cyrus, is full of illuminating suggestions. One of the lessons early impressed on this future ruler over a great nation was that he should so manage his government that "the citizens should not be capable of any act that was base or vile." Nor should be punished for vile acts, but should not be capable of them. Oh, what an ideal realm, where government was merely preventive of wickedness and rule was benignant and paternal! Cyrus became so enlightened that one of the most profound thoughts on justice that ever was expressed by mortal emanates from him: —"No one has any business with government who is not better than the governed." In all these centuries have we advanced beyond the careful training of the Persian youths, who were taught to do well two things; — draw the bow and speak the truth? Courage and honesty; absolute courage, uncompromising honesty.

Are they not all of political virtue? No,— we should add one more — modern society has developed this virtue through the evolution of generosity. We now believe in succoring the weak.[1]

History may be made to bear upon moral training. Children get deductions from concrete examples much quicker than from bare facts. Even in the epoch of their folk-lore tales the prudent mother will find suggestions from fairyland to point her great morals. The fairies are kind, generous, helpful; they submit to proper laws and revolt only against tyranny. Primitive people are simple in their ideas, needing but little supervision, but they too, must obey certain regulations that safeguard the general community. From history of the ancients, with their out-breaks of oppression, grounded on narrowness and religious bigotry, to the narrations of our own times, rich lessons may be borrowed and endless interest stimulated in noble deeds. But the mother should recollect that the best lesson she can give her child of justice and equity is the practice of those virtues toward him-

[1] As this book goes to press the most dreadful war the world has known annihilates the optimistic hopes of the Hague Peace Treaties. Alas, "Man's inhumanity to man must make the angels weep."

self. The mother whose ideas of political government are perverted by the frenzied pursuit of one particular end — which may be premature, unwise, unimportant — whose mind is warped and distorted in all its process by fanatical adherence to a single idea, so that more general ideas, greater principles, are subordinated to the insignificant item,— is unworthy to direct the moral education of her sons and daughters. There are misguided mothers who are at this instant making scape-goats of their children, catch-traps to inveigle into their maws the one morsel on which they have set their appetites, and who have concentrated all their efforts on inspiring in baby breasts a hatred of laws that seem partial to men over women. Have they any conception of the rancor, the bigotry, the unwholesome feelings they are exciting in hearts so young that they should be shielded from every suggestion of partisanship on any question? May wisdom come to these mothers before it is too late.

We are still under the old prejudice that young minds cannot grasp a general principle, and that philosophical reflections are unwelcome to them. But in reality even very young children are by nature

philosophical and they delight in a broad, general view. Indeed, to generalize is their especial tendency. It is very easy to give them right ideas about government, if a little pains are taken at the right time; that is, when they are interested in the matter.

A very small minority of thinking teachers have recently grown to a recognition of the need of some instruction for young people in the science and art of politics. Some books have been written for their enlightenment; notably Nordhoff's "Politics for Young Americans." But I should not advise parents to depend upon it as a means of complete instruction. Politics in the abstract make but dry reading, and very few children have such a thirst for knowledge about government that they will delve into a mass of mere words for elusive ideas. A parent who has himself a clear understanding of the principles of government and is moderately free from prejudices, can readily give all necessary instruction to his children. Bright young people catch up suggestions here and there which stimulate their desire for sound information. Over-hearing arguments and disputes they beseech you for "the truth." Too often they are given scraps and rags in place of clean, whole

fabric. It is not very easy for a person who is in the habit of thinking rather loosely himself to classify his ideas and reduce them to a clear, strong formula. This is going at once to the bottom of things, and not every one can do it. But nothing less satisfies children, and nothing less should satisfy us.

We find out for the first time how shallow is our knowledge of some fundamental matters when our small one puts the question,—

"Mother, what is government?"

Through our startled mind creeps an old formula, "by the people, for the people," and we reply with decision, "The people, my dear." The child hesitates. He will not ask what "people" means, for any baby knows that; but he goes forth with a sense of mystification. Thrown upon his own resources he thinks of the personality most commonly associated with public events and concludes that as a matter of fact, government means police. Many, many little ones have a general impression to this effect, and their love of the laws of their country is in ratio to their love of those functionaries whose aim in life seems to be to restrict the natural liberties and enjoyments of the young. When these young people attain

their majority it is not probable that it will seem to them a matter of vital importance how they vote. They will no doubt cast their vote where it will be of most benefit to themselves.

It is dangerous to let our children form their ideas of politics on the basis of street experiences. The public schools earnestly undertake to inculcate sound ideas regarding politics, and do so to a very large extent. Yet before I would entrust this part of my child's training to any school I should want to be very sure of the character of the teacher. It is highly improbable that he will present cool, calm truths, uncolored by his own preferences. He cannot. His tones and emphasis betray him. If he is popular with his pupils they will judge as he judges; if they dislike him they will go contrary to everything he advocates even though his utterances are as worthy as those of Rhadamanthus.

Who is to be trusted to teach impartial ideas of politics or of religion? "*We*," said my Sunday school teacher, the niece of the bishop, "are the church. All others are denominations!" And it was only through the providential intervention of a tattered edition of a patriotic history of the United

States, describing in graphic manner the sufferings of our soldiers during certain campaigns of the Revolution that I was enabled to offset the bigoted relation of colonial history by my opinionated English governess, whose thin cheeks used to burn as she *almost* called George Washington a traitor!

There is too much emotion and too little reason in the way we deal with politics. We talk too much of parties and persons and too little of principles. Our children know little beyond the fact that they are huzzahing for some one leader in opposition to another. Americans are very good-humored and bear no malice. The day after a presidential election I heard a street lounger hail a passing acquaintance in this fashion, "Hullo, Jim, how's T. R. now?" And the friend rejoined with the most amiable of accents, "He's all right, my boy!"

This is pleasant, but "life is real, life is earnest," and a deep responsibility rests upon us to give our children a keener insight into the great principle upon which government rests than they can gain by listening to flippant repartée and idle campaign talk.

I think we scarcely take enough account of the vagueness and misapprehension of the child mind

toward some abstract matters that we might make plain to them by taking a little pains. When I was very small I used often to accompany my father to the public buildings in Washington city. Looking with awe and love at the marble dome of the Capitol I would ask to whom it belonged.

"To everybody."

"To me?"

"Yes."

"Then," I would rejoin, after a period of silent pondering, "why can't I have my own part to take away?"

The answer to this was only a vague smile, for he apparently did not find it worth while to enter into even a simple explanation for the enlightenment of a little girl who was only seven years old. Yet, through all these years I have kept a vivid recollection of my wonder and my earnest desire to understand. I should have remembered equally well, perhaps, a simple and succinct reply to my question.

We never know what part of the day's experience will register itself indelibly upon a little child's brain. A parent should let no single opportunity slip of implanting useful ideas. And what he says

to-day he may have to repeat to-morrow in another form. No matter; it is by adding bit to bit that the idea finally grows solid in the little one's mind. In the midst of hurried and absorbing occupations we should pause to answer a searching question; not in a roundabout, careless fashion, but in a manner that will enable the child to carry on the train of thought for himself. Give the little, perplexed thing a start!

It is necessary for the mother to read and digest one or two authoritative books in every department of knowledge, so that she may get from a large store of facts a sound and genuine principle that she may offer as a beacon light to her child. There are fine opportunities now for women to gain acquaintance with the laws of their country. "Societies for Political Study" abound. Before long every mother should have learned enough, either from taking sides in debates or from reading reports of lectures, to be competent to instruct her child in the science of government. I wonder how many mothers are intending to apply their knowledge to this purpose?

CHAPTER XVIII

The Advantages of Travel

"I should like to have the pupil begin to travel in his infancy, especially — thereby killing two birds with one stone — into neighboring countries where his tongue, while it is yet supple, may be formed to new languages."— Montaigne.

WE are truly a nation of travelers. It is said that the first thing an American does when he settles a new piece of country is to build a railroad. Almost simultaneously goes upward the smoke from the chimney of a school-house. The smoke stack of the locomotive offers greater attractions to the lad racing along with his carelessly held pile of books than do the desk and bench with their suggestions of knowledge. He loiters to observe the engineer descend at a station to oil his machinery and notes critically the condition of wheels and pistons. What a nuisance it is to have to spend hours in-doors, over dull lessons!

There is reason for this instinctive preference. The one thing breathes the fulness of actual life; the other is but a preparatory step toward action. Book knowledge is, compared with actual experience, as "moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine," in its effect upon character. What we read influences our thoughts but what we see and hear quickens our blood and stirs our feelings. Pedants become narrow in their sympathies, while travelers naturally grow tolerant, excusing much because they have an opportunity to compare men with their neighbors and to understand the limitations of natural environments. All except dreamers are natural explorers. The more civilized a nation is the more adventurous are its citizens. In all times it has been the policy of enlightened rulers to send its wisest, most responsible men to visit other countries for the purpose of studying their social conditions. In olden times the sons of kings passed certain terms among neighboring people, not more to establish friendly relations than to discover the reason for their prosperity or their poverty, and return to put their new wisdom in practise for their own benefit. Increase of knowledge and a broader understanding of human nature have

been the avowed reasons for traveling, but there are unacknowledged reasons that exert even a stronger influence.

There is a certain spirit of restlessness that seeks vent in mere change of place, without regard to any intellectual advantage that may come of it. Germans call it the "wanderlust." French people are singularly free from it, because they are intensely patriotic and exceedingly occupied with their personal development. When they go abroad it is with a set purpose; either to accumulate money or ideas. But they always intend to return home to let their native country get the advantage of whatever they may have gained. The Americans, however, often travel aimlessly; because it is the fashion; because they have money to squander; because they are tired and want variety, of any kind whatsoever. There are bureaus that now take charge of these restless people and give them a little education in art and geography at so much per mile. Railroad guides indicate what they are to admire, and sight-seeing vans meet them at stations to prevent their getting lost and wandering around to look at the wrong things in strange cities. I think all this must do a

good deal of good. But there are a few people who like to make up their own itineraries; who plan long in advance of a trip, and arrange successive journeys so that in the course of time they may go over a great deal of space and get varied impressions of scenery and industries. Their notebooks are very unorthodox, but they gather in impressions that broaden their general views.

How many parents, though, consider that systematic travel, undertaken deliberately and with a definite purpose, has an important part to play in education? It has long been customary to add the finishing touch to the education of a son or daughter by a term of foreign travel. But often it is a costly and disappointing experiment because it is undertaken without any true feeling of its object and aim. The young people go merely for pleasure and from the desire of increasing their social importance. They wander through cathedrals and picture galleries, gape at Constantinople, shudder over Egypt, and on the whole, wish, as did poor Caddy Jellaby, that "Africa was dead"; since it only exists to bore and weary. But their return home is a triumph, for

they "have been abroad for six months, you know!" And until they go again, and get shocked out of their egotism by a wider view of something seen hurriedly and miscomprehended, they talk learnedly of Paris, London and Rome, which they do not know in the least.

Superficial sight-seeing is not travel. Old Doctor Johnson remarked that foreign travel added little to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. But then he was critical as to what constitutes conversation; it really does afford themes for talk. But very few travelers in the Old World give their stay-at-home friends anything worth having when they come back. Usually they seem to have been jaded, confused, satiated with variety. Their impressions have not been classified and remain permanently incoherent.

It is deeply true that anything which is undertaken without a moral impulse for its basis cannot enlighten us, but merely satisfies the instinct of superficial curiosity. There is a vast difference between the mass of rubbish brought back from over the seas by the newspaper reporter who "does" the globe

within a limited number of days, on a wager, and the calm, well digested views of such travelers as Bayard Taylor and Paul Bourget.

The one made the voyage to Europe while he was young, under circumstances of extreme deprivation, which few young persons would now think endurable. "An enthusiastic desire of visiting the Old World haunted me from early childhood," he says in "Views-a-Foot." And he observed with simplicity in the introduction that such a journey allowed him greater opportunities than could be enjoyed by richer tourists for the study of human nature in every condition of life. Bourget, journeying luxuriously through America, avowed the same aim. Somehow, I like the French critic better, warmly as my sympathy goes out to the brilliant young American. Bourget succeeded in more completely placing himself *en rapport* with the country he visited. To understand other people well it is necessary to efface oneself to a certain extent in their company, and get their point of view.

And this is where our young people are generally at fault. They go away from home to be seen and heard; they carry their egotism, their little bundle

of prejudices with them. It is wonderful how deeply imbued even a little child can be with feelings antagonistic to people whose customs are different from those that prevail in his own home. It is parents who create this inflexibility. They too often provide for their children's entrance into the world by painting that world as bad. "My dear, beware of wandering beyond the gate," warned a Russian mother when her young son reached the age of curiosity. "The people will dynamite you if you go out of the park."

Is it better to be dynamited young or grow up to hate and fear mankind?

Few mothers have the self-restraint to keep their opinions concerning other people to themselves, leaving to their children the valuable training to be got by the constant correction of hasty ideas, through experience. Childhood should be adaptable, but in our country it seldom is. With the true American temperament the wax of infancy hardens quickly into the marble of maturity. There is therefore, great need of leaving to children as long as possible, their natural credulity and confidingness. It is sad to hear a young skeptic criticise his elders; to see a

sneer on baby lips. I should rather watch my child closely, so that no harm might come to his innocence, and let him believe a little longer that the world is all good, true and beautiful. Detestable is that doctrine of preparing the young for life by showing them its uglier side first. It is dangerous to hold up the examples of evil before children, for from this time they will look for it and expect to find it everywhere. Let us train them to right standards and let them do their own comparing. When they go out among strangers it should be in the mental attitude of respect for their peculiarities. "Doubtless," we should suggest, "you appear as queer to them."

If upon childish simplicity there has been grafted a broad interest in other people and other lands, journeying will become a valuable part of education during the earlier years. Babies should not, ordinarily, be taken on journeys, with a view to their intellectual advantage. At the bottle age the jolting of cars while encouraging to repose of body is often provocative of spleen and unreasonable prejudices against strange countries! Seven years at least, should have been attained by the young person before his mind will be in a state to appreciate even

the more general aspects of foreign lands. It is quite doubtful if children get much permanent benefit from trips to Europe. For the purpose of learning modern languages residence abroad for a few years, between the ages of seven and twelve, is of great advantage. But otherwise than for the sake of the languages, these tours are rather detrimental than useful. To see many things which cannot be understood, and which there is no real wish to understand, brings about an indifference toward what is strange. Afterward, when the proper age to appreciate such things arrives, the edge of curiosity will have been dulled, and the cream of the first impression skimmed away. The youthful tourist often shows in his face that he is confronted with greater wonders than he can take in. He gets blasé with the extraordinary. He has begun at the wrong end, and it is doubtful if he can ever get back the freshness, the enthusiastic curiosity which has been quenched.

All this is unnatural. The young are eager explorers when they are journeying toward that which has interest for them. But their sympathies are more with the present, with the near-by. For this reason

we should be ruled by the axiom of our greatest philosopher and "proceed from the known to the unknown." Familiarize a child early with his immediate surroundings and so prepare him gradually for extended journeyings. Show him all the interesting features of his native place, the haunts which strangers come to see, but which probably you have yourself, never taken the trouble to visit. How often I have heard elderly men and women say that they always meant to go to see such and such a place, within easy access of their homes, but haven't got there yet!

Journeyings with little ones should always be leisurely, not hurried. The parent should be an intelligent, patient guide, ready to explain matters that arouse the child's interest; ready to lead him on to fresh scenes with increased power to understand them. Alas, mothers mostly love their children's bodies more than they love their intellects. They are solicitous for their souls, but know comparatively little about the working of their minds. They often seem to have no conception of their vast intellectual responsibility. Look at the average mother, leaning back in the day coach of a Westward-bound express.

She is absorbed in her paper-backed novel. She left home determined to leave all her cares behind her; to see new things that will rest her by their variety. She reads persistently. Nevertheless, there is her child — a bright-faced, rather wistful looking little creature of half a dozen years.

She turns from the window. "Look, mamma, what river is that?"

"That, child — oh, that is the same river we saw awhile ago."

"Mamma, quick! What is that great building showing against the sky? Such a queer shape! We are in another town."

"So we are, child. I don't know! Amuse yourself. Don't bother me!"

An elderly man in the rear catches the child's disappointed gaze as the mother settles back to her book and shrugs his shoulders with a cynical smile. Is she ignorant or careless? Something of both. The fathers are a little better, because it is more of a novelty to them to hear their children's questions. Then too, they are more objective. Their business keeps them in touch with the outside world. I have heard a man say that one should never ask a direction

of a woman; ten to one, she will make a misleading mistake. However, there are charming exceptions; when a woman does know the way she will often go far out of her path to help another. But children usually prefer taking trips with their fathers. Besides being more interesting, they are usually allowed more personal independence, and they learn to take care of themselves.

There are very few ideal guardians, such as Mr. George in the "Rollo" books. He trains his young nephew to take charge of little excursions, and to make his own way, unaided, among strangers in a foreign country where a tongue unfamiliar to the lad is spoken. Many valuable hints can be gleaned by thoughtful parents from these little books, which are meant particularly for children. The idea of permitting a lad or even a girl, to organize and take charge of small trips is not a bad one; provided they know the ground somewhat. There could be less benefit if the ground to be gone over is altogether strange. In that case a mother ought to be cicerone, and study up her itinerary a little in advance, so that no chance of thorough observation may be lost. Better for any child to know well one landscape, one

county, one state, than to have been a superficial globe trotter.

I do not say that one should see the whole of his own country before going abroad; but he should see its characteristic features. Is there anything superior to Niagara in Europe? I think not. And the Rocky Mountains are beyond description in words. All the Western continent is rich in surprises and marvels. And our land is the land of the living. Offering astounding contrasts, presenting in little all the races and something of their life, it yet deals with what touches ourselves at every point, and therefore is the more comprehensible by young minds. It is most interesting to them, because they are naturally in sympathy with it. Life, progress, fresh creative forces at work everywhere, make of America the land of vigorous youth, while Europe, full of dead interests, mingled at every turn with suggestions that appeal to a mature, cultivated mind, may well be reserved as the cap-sheaf of a complete education.

CHAPTER XIX

Talented Children

"Tell me what you admire and I will tell you what you are; at least, as regards your talents, tastes and character." — Sainte-Beuve.

IF we would know whether our child has any kind of ability that is likely to bring him to distinction it is necessary for us to understand the signs that indicate the presence of talent.

The first and most positive sign is a strong taste for some particular kind of effort. Many and various as tastes are they are all based upon one single foundation, so that where that is present we may be sure that capacity is present. I do not allude to mere *fancies,* or likings for artificial and trivial things; but to those preferences that seem to be rooted in character. One may have a taste for every sort of frivolity, but that is merely a passion of the senses, not of the mind. It is curious that every great ca-

pacity has its ignoble satellite, a kind of trailer that often puts on the cast-off garments of its leader and deceives the unwary on-looker by its flaunting airs. A child under the influence of one of these mock talents will exhibit, perhaps, some signs of the genuine capacity before sinking down to his natural level; such young people are precocious, and frequently surprise and delight their parents by exhibitions of superiority that soon disappear. It is well known that the lower the species, in general, the earlier its specimens come to maturity. Little negroes are extraordinarily wise at four years and dull at fourteen. Nervous and volatile children of superficial parents sometimes present an appearance of youthful brilliancy that induces high expectations of their future; but they seldom fulfil these hopes. Tallow sputters more than wax, but wastes sooner.

One should be very fearful of encouraging "smartness" in a child. In fact, the more assurance he exhibits the more one may doubt the possession of any real ability. Precocity is often but the rapid response made by very malleable natures to unusual stimulus of circumstances. An ambitious and adroit parent, wholly intent on pushing his offspring to an

exhibition of remarkable feats may readily have a "phenomenon" in his family; before it tumbles down to mediocrity or stupidity. But the natural development of an intelligent being demands *time* as an essential element of normal growth, and if the beginning is encouraging there should be no urging of capacity. One of the best authorities on psychology of the will states that we should not absolutely *teach* the child anything except in response to his curiosity; that we should be guided in educational methods by his pace. With some modification I believe this to be the correct theory: if the surroundings are what they should be the child's intelligence will be the normal guide to his education; he may be instructed at the rate he seems best able to proceed. Scientists now acknowledge that education has most effect on mediocre minds. It can do a great deal with them, less for those that are highly endowed, while talented persons, even though they may receive all the usual courses of schooling, usually educate themselves. They gain their most valuable education through the exercise of their strongest faculty. Work is their tutor and self-directing energy their college.

Parents and tutors need to have a care that their

efforts to be helpful to their children do not interfere with the natural development of their faculties. Sometimes such an interference comes about through a mistake about their tastes and capacities, but oftener because a parent is anxious to direct the career of his son or daughter from some conventional standard. But no preference of our own should make us exert an undue influence over the future of the individual who must live out his own destiny after parents have passed away. "True education," said Guyot, "is disinterested. It rears the child for himself, for the world, above all, for humanity." There is now a broader view of personal liberty in the choice of a life pursuit than obtained in the days of our forebears. Puritan ministers dedicated their most promising sons to the work they considered divine, irrespective of any contrariness on the part of the "chosen vessel." A departure from that fixed destiny was sorrowfully disapproved. One of my relatives tells a story of how his father — a notable pillar of the church — rebuffed the efforts of a visiting cousin, who was a commodore in our navy, to advance the interests of his young son. "Jim," he observed, "I can do something for the boy. I'll send him to West

Point." "Isaac," solemnly returned the father, "I hope to see him on the walls of Zion, preaching salvation to the heathen." Years afterward the young man enlisted in the army. He would better have had the easier start, since his fate was so fixed; but the father could not think so.

We should study the individuality of our child from his birth, so that we may avoid a wasteful employment of his energies in pursuits that are alien to his disposition and foreign to his needs. The particular development of any special faculty should always rest upon the basis of broad general culture, and even where there are unmistakable signs of talent this should not be dispensed with. The mother ought to be zealous in affording to her child every opportunity for *broad culture;* for the tendency of the day is toward specializing, and unless we gain in our earlier days a good general knowledge of literature and science the probability is that there will never be time for it afterwards. However, the child of marked ability not seldom exhibits extreme restlessness under any kind of instruction that has nothing to do with the subject he prefers, and we must not keep him too closely to the beaten track. Pegasus cannot be har-

nessed to a plow, but will insist on flying, even if he provokes scandal by his escapades. We may hold out to original young persons as inducements to the fulfilling of distasteful tasks, the incentive of a privilege of afterward devoting themselves to what they like better.

There is scarcely anything in which we have so much need of caution as in the matter of influencing our child's activity. Indeed, with children who are able and clever advice and influence must be indirect rather than personal. Put opportunities in their way and then leave them alone. In order to test their talent and develop their power of persistency it is well to interpose slight obstacles in their path once in awhile. Tenacity of purpose is the bed-rock of success in any career, and we want to find out whether our child has it. If he returns again and again to a thing from which he has been distracted and patiently conquers difficulties we may be sure that he is made of the right stuff. It augurs well for the destiny of a child if he dries his tears after a mishap and sets to work to repair the disaster. When he grows up and fronts the greater failures of life he will not be one of those who are continually

calling out upon their "bad luck" instead of attempting to mend it.

The one unmistakable sign of superior ability is *concentration*. "Concentration," said Emerson, "is the secret of success; in art, in war, and in fact, in all the affairs of human life." It exhibits itself so early that we may detect signs of it in the youngest infant. The baby who grasps your finger in a tentative, inquiring manner and holds it fast with a gradually increasing pressure, while his eyes regard you steadily, is an embryo personage to be some day reckoned with. When, later on, he sets his little heart on a certain toy and is not to be weaned from his preference by the display of other attractive objects; when he shows precocity in realizing differences and manifests both likings and dislikes strongly, rejoice over this little one, for he doubtless possesses some of that singleness of purpose which is the essence of all genius.

Between genius and talent there is a great gulf. Genius is a fusion of the emotional and intellectual natures which gives to ability the heat of a passion; the object of its preference is loved like a mistress, sought through the world, suffered for, died for, with

enthusiasm, with joy. The work itself is the absorbing idea, not the end and aim, and all other considerations are lost sight of while the way is torn through incredible obstacles. Genius disdains any other mode of self-development than its "idea"; being wholly one-sided and just a little mad.

The history of genius is one of struggle against adversities and we should not be sorry that there is slight probability of our finding a real genius among our children. Galton observes that there have never been more than four hundred great geniuses; but he leaves out Americans. Assuredly, however, genius is not a gift to be craved, although just a touch of it lends romance to life. Where it exists in supreme degree it subjects its owner to some of the most distressing sufferings; where it is present even to a high degree, but is accompanied by limitations and a temperament that hinders and aborts its development, we have a spectacle of frailty so disheartening as to make us turn with relief to more robust and practical specimens of humanity.

One of the happy features of talent is that it is practical. More of the head than of the heart, it prudently looks to the results of action as it is not

dominated by an instinct that defies reason. A young person who has talent and no trace of genius is likely to have a successful career in any pursuit he chooses to follow if he stands to his choice and with all his mind and strength *wills* to succeed, undaunted by obstacles.

Strength of will is inseparable from talent, and is one of its earliest indications. A vacillating, very tractable child may grow into a lovely character, but scarcely a great one. Do not let us confound strength of will with wilfulness; they are entirely different. The one is the outcome of a distinct purpose conceived in the person's own mind and adhered to in obedience to some inward behest that speaks louder than authorities; the other is revolt against restraints to impulses or whims. When a child shows determination to have or to do a certain thing, let us find out the mainspring of his conduct; whether, in the old-fashioned phrase, he has "a strong will or a great won't." In the one case he needs only guidance, in the other more careful, anxious training. I rejoice in a child who shows early a strong bent for something; who is resolved to do that particular thing even if he is torn away from it and punished. It is a good dog who re-

turns to the scent, after being punished for his obstinacy. Often he proves to be in the right and his master in the wrong. There are false scents, but should we for that reason make a child distrust his own instinct?

Zeal in work is another sign of real ability. But by zeal, I do not mean necessarily, the plodding habit. I mean the innate interest in effort that impels one to go on after the required amount has been finished. There is a nature that makes requirements of itself, higher than any that outsiders would dare suggest. "I have a standard," averred Flaubert, "above other standards. I seek not so much to please the world as to satisfy myself." The child who plays heartily when he plays and works with all his might at whatever he undertakes has no need of persuasions to be industrious or commands to make progress. All his parents should do is to keep careful oversight of him and advise him when he is puzzled. A tendency to be desultory, such as is often exhibited by children before they know themselves, should be gently checked and steadiness encouraged. Teach the little one to finish what he has begun if it is worth finishing; but as many infantile pursuits are trivial enough to weary

their young projectors it is injudicious to make them continue what they have grown tired of during the process of creation.

Every man or woman who has amounted to much has been distinguished by the power of working hard; and usually this determination has betrayed itself very early in life. Genius alternates periods of frantic effort with spells of idleness in which spent forces recover tone. But talent proceeds more steadily and smoothly. Its rests are regular and its work more methodical. Without method it is lost, and I believe that there is no more certain sign of ability in a child than an innate tendency to methodize his labors and the disposal of his time. Some girls and boys fret at the arrangement parents or teachers make of their hours, sensible that they need some other method, but scarcely having the logic to explain their intuitions. Wherever there is a persistent discontent with regulations imposed by authorities I think it would be a wiser plan to let the young person re-arrange his time to suit his own supposed needs. If the young daughter wants to study before daybreak and repose herself later on, there may "be a

reason," as the slang of the hour runs. Let her experiment a little with herself. And if the boy insists upon learning his lessons at midnight, after the family has retired, saying that his mind is brighter then, absolute prohibition should have a better foundation than the extra gas-bill. After physiology has given its enlightenment he may change his mind. If not, then he really does know his own nature better than his guardians.

But in order to bring to fruition the beautiful germ of talent regular habits should be inculcated in the plastic days of early childhood. The little one should be taught not only to have a particular place for his belongings, but a particular time for every special duty. When the time has once been chosen it should not be lightly changed. Professor William James had something to say upon this point which is marked by great wisdom: "The great point in all education is to make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and to avoid growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us as we should guard against the plague. The more details of our daily work we can hand over

to the infallible and effortless custody of automatism the more the higher processes of mind will be set free for its own proper work."

We may set this rational advice off against the airy theory of Rousseau that "the child should form no habits." I believe that the more good habits, especially relating to his mental activities, a child can form, the better for his progress. "The habit became a need with me," remarked the brilliant but self-willed George Sand, referring to her self-imposed discipline in regard to fixing hours of work; "and the need became a faculty."

This is something that ought to be writ large, in letters of light: that the fixed habit of certain occupations at certain hours each day confers a positive ability to pursue the work undertaken. The mind looks for its work as the body for food and digests what is given it. Every mortal must eventually find out for himself what is the best system, so I should allow even a young child a good deal of liberty, if it shows preference. Let it experiment with itself and then the defects of any system that is poor will be found out and another can be arranged that is better.

No other discipline is so good for any one as the

constant measuring of oneself against a high standard. The mother's part is to place before her child's eyes beautiful ideals; then leave him to Nature. If she has succeeded in teaching him to admire truly worthy things she has educated him as well as she can. Our ideals in early life become our principles later on.

To have bright, talented children is the laudable wish of every father and mother. But let us recollect that while talent promises it is character that fulfils. Any talent is worthless that has not its roots deep in integrity. "A little integrity," said the Sage of Concord, "is worth any career!" Before we build upon our child's ability let us be sure he has in him the strength to be true and the courage to hold fast to the truth. The honest child is the strong child, for he is capable of seeing things as they are, of describing them as he sees them, and of rightly judging their values.

CHAPTER XX

Esthetic Education

"The one true fountain of beauty is *feeling*. Feeling reveals to us true ideas."— Schlegel.

LOVE of beauty is a different thing from love of the beautiful. The first is so habitual in man as to have become almost an instinct, but the latter must be continually developed in each generation by proper culture. No item of education is more important; no one more neglected. That parents have small sympathy with this branch of a practical education shows how far we all are from recognizing the intimate relation of art to morals and business.

Were it not for the sense of the beautiful in man we should have no buildings, no factories, no machinery, no trades. We should be without enthusiasm or ideals. All our intellectual energy originates in the instinctive choice of the thing best suited to our

own preservation, and through the habit of selecting what is congenial to us taste comes into being. What then, is taste but an enlarging of our instinct for life and happiness? "Much of our happiness," eloquently says Edward Griggs, in his book "The Philosophy of Art," is in appreciation; imagine life denuded of it; how intolerably barren our existence would be!"

How foolish it is then, to neglect the training of a faculty that controls our thoughts and guides all the acts of our lives. "It is a mere matter of taste," we say lightly to the person who differs from us in some matter of conduct, politics or religion; as if taste were a trifle, and not the unfailing indicator of the whole character.

All our judgments in affairs and in morals are founded upon an idea of relative values, and we never get beyond choosing the thing that makes appeal to our permanent sense of fitness; that is, to our strongest feeling. Every one reaches out after what attracts him; he sees good in it and in nothing else. But the feelings can be educated, so that mere glitter shall not be taken for true gold, and liking may be trained to wait upon understanding. It is through education

of our *preferences* that all progress is made. The untaught child naturally chooses the thing that has a superficial attraction; his senses lead him toward beauty, and not toward the beautiful. Many persons remain children all their lives in their inability to perceive qualities which only reveal themselves to careful seekers. A true feeling for beauty, an instinctive preference for the pure and lovely over that which is merely satisfying to the casual glance, is a talisman in a labyrinth of falsehood. There are people with such nice perceptions that they cannot be deceived even about art values respecting which they have received no instruction; their taste revolts against what is gaudy as certainly as it appreciates what is delicate and refined. But they are in the small minority. Most of us go astray easily in this bewildering world and need standards to guide us aright. It is therefore, our duty to develop in the child-soul not only a love of the good and beautiful but an enthusiastic purpose to look for it everywhere and not to be content with anything that does not satisfy his highest demands.

What is the essential element of the beautiful? Harmony between outward appearance and inward

purpose. Nothing that has something patched on by way of ornament, that can be pruned without destroying its symmetry, that can be altered with benefit to its looks is really beautiful. There are few perfect objects in Nature, almost none in the world of art; but there are millions everywhere about us that have the *spirit* of beauty to such an extent that our minds and hearts are not only satisfied but exalted by contemplation of them. One can contemplate forever a single oak tree, laden with its rich, dark leaves and baby acorns, without exhausting its possibilities for gratification. The music of a mountain streamlet, winding downward through rocky crevices has enough melody in it to set one dreaming endlessly. What nature can gaze at streaks of forked lightning racing through pitch-black clouds and not feel awe-struck by suggestions of deeper, wilder harmonies in Nature than any the mechanical works of man afford?

In natural phenomena the ignorant find only subjects for superstitious fear; in the most splendid manifestations of harmonies in color and shapes, merely means of gratifying some practical need. An exacerbated old maid whose story was related by Mrs. Stowe, awoke one autumn morning and saw in the sky the

pale moon of dawn attended by its mysterious star, then swiftly overwhelmed by the wonderful tide of purple and rose that Aurora throws before her arriving car, and all she could find to say was —" It's a good day to kill the hog!"

I dare not think how much training in childhood such a nature would have required before it might have been rendered susceptible to the meaning of beauty in the world. But something might have been done, perhaps. With the average child much may be accomplished to increase the possibilities of happiness and enlarge the whole character to an appreciation of all the sources of harmony and truth.

I realize the inconveniences that attend such a training. When we make our child attentive to details, sharpen his perceptions so that he analyzes his enjoyments and compares all objects with the perfect standard we have given him, then we shall find it hard to live up to the ideals we have encouraged him to maintain. He may find the things we are compelled to support about us insupportable to his ultra-refined sensibilities; he may become hyper-critical of appearances, before he gets beyond the stage of fault-

finding into that of larger tolerance. But it is a necessary ante-chamber to the realm of peace, this of carping at what is distasteful. There are two great opposing laws before which all must bow; possibility and actuality. We stand between what we want and what we can have and either lament or smile, according to our pluck. It seems to me the right thing to teach the child that "noble discontent" with the makeshifts of life which does not consist in disdaining, but in accepting them with eyes open to their defects but recognition of the necessity of getting along with them until he can by his own efforts attain to something better.

"It is but a chromo, my dear, and the collection of paintings in the Morgan gallery are wonders. But there is a true spirit in this little thing, do you not see its meaning? Some day, when you have made a good deal of money and can have what you love best perhaps you may buy a wonderful picture. Meanwhile, see how much beauty you can discover in this poor little thing which is the best we have." No true-hearted child will fail to respond nobly to such appeal to his right instincts; he will preserve

the larger out-look his educated tastes give him, but will appreciate too, the little thing that helps to make home beautiful.

With the young good and beautiful are convertible terms. Aristotle declared that "Youth loves beautiful rather than useful conduct," and despite the latest revelations of philanthropists who labor in the big American cities to train children, as to their extraordinary devotion to what is altogether utilitarian, I believe that instinctively, youth does appreciate the essence of the good in the beautiful. It is pleased with fair appearances and cannot divorce them from what satisfies moral ideas. The small child always finds its mother's face lovely when she is good to him; later on, he deifies his favorites everywhere, not believing faultiness possible. Leave him his illusions! Yet they are not inconsistent with development of that artistic conception of worth which measures and scrutinizes, while it admires. If one knows how to look for truth he must with equal precision discern falsehood, even if found at home. But so long as there is no attempt made to deceive, so long as there is frankness, neither physical nor mental asymmetry will repel even the critical taste of the

well-balanced child. Nothing but a moral disorder can make the beloved parent un-beautiful.

By giving our children right education we impose a rigid obligation on ourselves to walk along the same path we point out for them, or else we incur the penalty of losing their esteem. "*You* don't do it," the young person will say pointedly, when admonished on the virtues of moderation and simplicity. Youth, severe and uncompromising, is moved by a strong impetus, and from young persons trained to keen observation we must expect some startling comments now and then. "A chiel's among ye takin' notes," and a bluff, free tone marks that person young or old, who believes that his own opinion is in accord with right standards. The critical faculty is the basis and accompaniment of sound judgment. Without it a person may be temporarily an agreeable companion, but he will not be a profitable one and his individual life will be a failure. For fixity of purpose is essential to success, and the purpose which is not chosen deliberately, wisely, with a full realization of its ultimate rewards, is merely obstinate persistence in a weak, shallow fancy.

It is then, right and necessary for us to develop the

critical faculty in our children. Close, careful perception is the beginning. We may appeal to his preference about the colors he sees in flowers, in all natural objects, then in such art objects as interest him in his home. Show him symmetrical forms and bid him compare these with others that lack symmetry. Contrast the garish and gaudy with the lovely and refined in color schemes, and get his instinctive ideas. Then, induce him to give his reasons. State that a mere whimsical "I like it because I do," is a silly foundation for a preference, and that a reasonable person should be able to recognize his own reasons. Gradually, he will advance beyond that stage when coarse masses of color and the big and massive are more attractive than the delicate and dainty. People of crude taste are seduced by what is overwhelming; they like the sensation of being stunned by loud music and whirling motions, knowing little of pleasure beyond the sense impression of delicious coma. We do a great deal if we can rescue our child early, from the chance of his being made to come under such demoralizing influences as may be exerted over him by the brutal forces that

wait about us everywhere, when we go out from the seclusion of home into crowds.

It would scarcely be worth while to spend time on the training of the sense of the beautiful in children if it were not inseparable from an education of the moral sense. That child who learns to appreciate beauty, to criticise all departures from it, in Nature, in art and in conduct, will not fall an easy victim to any debasing temptation. His taste is his bulwark. Esthetic education consists in training the mind to perceive and the heart to feel, not only the greatest amount of beauty that resides in any object or condition, but the greatest amount of moral symmetry; which is truth.

We should distinguish between sentiment for what is beautiful, and a real appreciation of it. The one is superficial, the other discriminating. Yet, there is a possibility of general appreciation without knowledge. Many persons whom opportunity has never visited, have an almost passionate appreciation of the beautiful. But we find that they usually have the moral nature very highly developed. They are capable of love; in its highest, purest form. I wonder

whether any nature can love deeply and consistently that has not a very strong instinct for the beautiful; as opposed to that superficial liking for the merely pretty, which I called before, beauty-love, and less worthy than love of the beautiful? Into the purest taste there enters an austere conception of the pure and true. It cannot tolerate a lie.

General impressions naturally come before discriminating sensations. Young persons fall into raptures with what they like, because they are not yet trained to recognize details and they mistake flights of imagination for artistic enjoyment. Without the development that comes from training in observation and in comparison they must always remain insensible to the finer manifestations of beauty. Esthetics, as a branch of education, has three notable stages, corresponding to the natural progression of our minds from the simple to the complex; from what appeals to a single sense, as the eye or the ear, to what arouses and satisfies all the impulses of our emotional nature.

First comes love of beauty of material, making appeal to us as rich and dazzling color; afterward, as harmoniously blended tints and symphonies. A child's earliest feeling for beauty is admiration for

vividly colored objects, and we must minister long and wisely to this yearning before leading him on to the next step — which came to our rude fore-fathers of the forest — appreciation of form. Much observation of Nature is necessary before there comes recognition of symmetry, of appropriate arrangement. And for a really intelligent, sympathetic comprehension of beauty of form I believe a logical mind is necessary as well as good training. Some degree of understanding of it may be developed in almost every one. The child who revels in a wild waste of confusion may be taught to "bring order out of chaos" by adjusting his toys into some pleasing combination, for instance, and by arranging the furniture of a room. If his arrangements are in the highest degree eccentric, it is only what can be expected at first. By practice he will come to an appreciation of symmetry in arrangement. And that is a great gain.

The word "artistic" has been so misapplied that most people suppose that it means something rather disorderly and hap-hazard. How often literature gives us the prim, precise maiden aunt, with her narrow, intense love of exact outline, and the art-loving

niece all on fire with raptures over "color harmonies" and contempt for everything that is not picturesque! Let us give our sympathy however, to the derided aunt. Craze for color is a lower degree of the sense of beauty than appreciation of symmetrical arrangement. Sculpture is a finer achievement of the intellect than painting. Savages and ignorant children can take pleasure in color display, but only an educated mind is moved through effects of form.

Exaggeration sways masses, so the *appearance* of an artistic sensibility usually carries more weight with it than the real power, for it rants and poses and makes the world gape. So it comes to pass that the tuppenny rhymer and the bold dauber in color are more valued than the man of magnificent scientific imagination, working out results that will influence millions, while he is by his age forgot.

Only sound training in esthetics, which implies a sense of true values, can lead us to the highest degree of enlightenment. The true artist, though he may at times indulge in reverie, is not a dreamer, but a keen, accurate observer. Patient study of the realities in Nature is the basis of all worthy art.

Through this we arrive at the third and highest degree of attainment of the sense of beauty — appreciation of associated values, of *degrees* of perfection.

To lead our child onward toward this high goal we must train his moral nature patiently, wisely. We must teach him to be keenly observant and accurate in representation; to be true and simple; to love virtue, for the good and the beautiful are one. Every one cannot learn the gospel of beauty in the same way. Different temperaments are alive to different effects. One child will find the delight of his life in music; another in color combinations; more rarely there is one who shows preference for form and expression and is sensitive to the beautiful as exhibited in architecture and in those highest symbols of thought — words. The wise parent will minister to each child according to its deep, individual need.

CHAPTER XXI

Children in Society

"Breadth and nutrition are to be constant factors in our ideal course of study. Enrichment in its true sense does not come by adding more formal studies anywhere, but by supplying a more full and complete social life in the home and in the school. Any studies which minister to this point are legitimate."— Dutton.

ONE of the most marked differences between the training of children in the Old World and in our country is in the preparation given for social life. Over there it is a distinct aim of education to enable a young person to enter the world well; to bear his part wisely and gracefully among others; to understand what is demanded by his position and pay due consideration to those with whom he is brought in contact, according to the measure of his social importance.

Such a training is necessarily regulated by a pervading recognition of *caste*. The infant peasant is

imbued with the sense of deference; the young nobleman with that of dignity. Each punctiliously performs his part. The well reared child of the higher class early learns to control his temper, because any display of ill-humor is "bad form"; to be courteous because courtesy is a bulwark against rudeness from his inferiors and a passport among his equals. While the child of humbler class is obliged to practise the self-restraint as a means of winning favor and "getting on." Each grows up with a shrewd apprehension of the importance of forming desirable connections, and turning to advantage the chances of acquaintanceship. The boy is sent to school fortified with certain precepts against "low associations" and in favor of cultivating those likely to further his interests in life. The girl acquires almost from infancy, notions of "caste."

There is no denying that such systematic training in conduct with a continual view to self-interest has a tendency to develop what we call flunkeyism. In any nature in which selfishness and meanness overrule the impulses of the heart, there is a ready made snob, only needing occasion to manifest the strong bias of his character. It is true that any system

which exhibits the differences that incontestably exist between the rank and file of society seems to offer a sort of sanction to a snobbish estimate of people. But is it by any means certain that if these differences are not openly declared they will not be found out anyway? If we strive to rear our child in ignorance of all class distinctions, will he continue blind to them when, after years have passed, he comes to observe the usages of the world?

There was a certain young man of high connections and undoubtedly "blue" blood, who in the pioneer days of our western civilization, threw away all his opportunities, to become a missionary among the Nebraska Indians. Marrying a southern heiress whose possessions consisted mainly of slaves, he refused to "own" them, and let them all drift off, wherever they chose to go. He reared his six children in ignorance of their relationship with notable personages in England and in the States, curtly telling them, in response to any questions, that "our family is like a potato, the best part is under ground." But despite the most rigorous repression of instincts of family pride those same boys and girls grew to maturity burning with desire to find out all they

could about the representatives of a name often appearing in their histories. Ultimately, they discovered their claims to belong to certain distinguished societies, to which their associates belonged, and made it the business of years to hunt up the records that saintly minister had taken pains to hide. Every item that was encouraging to their desire for social elevation was hailed with enthusiasm; valuable energy and time were consumed in research that should have been needless, and more thought was bestowed on a comparatively trivial matter than would ever have been, but for the mistaken efforts of the father to repress natural and irrepressible instincts of family dignity.

"Noblesse oblige." The heritage of intellectual elevation that has been hardly earned by some worthy ancestor should not be ruthlessly torn to shreds when he dies, but pass down the ages. Qualities are, after all, the only inheritance that stands the test of time. Wealth gets dissipated, but honors shine through the tarnish of the world's forgetfulness. If a child has not the happiness to number a hero among his progenitors, then we can at least teach him to become one himself; to found a family; which is one of the

noblest of ambitions, and one inspiring to the true American spirit. But it is a poor policy to affect a humility about life which we really do not feel, and assure our young people that it makes no difference what sort of society they go into, so they achieve success in affairs.

As a matter of fact, we are continually classifying people; not so much by their merits, which we know only through personal experience, as by their appearance. There are stages of refinement, and we instinctively choose for friends those belonging to our own level. And we have a right to so choose them. If our worldly circumstances are below our worth we need not associate with persons whose only likeness to ourselves is in the amount of their income. Must we take for bosom friends an illiterate sign painter because he earns with his hands the same income we earn by our brains, and lives as well, so far as material circumstances are concerned? One blessed advantage of this country is that a person who is manifestly "gentle" in virtue and taste belongs by right to the highest society. There is no possibility of realizing an ideal "social equality" so long as there exists great differences in the capacities of indi-

viduals. In our inmost hearts we do not believe in it, nor want it. Why then, keep up the pretense?

It is of very little use to be hypocritical with our children; to call public schools "great social levelers," and allow them to choose their playmates from the street. Our preferences, our innate sense of propriety break through the thin crust of determined virtue at the first alarm of an undesirable friendship. We cannot have Clarence inviting Mike Dolan into the house, nor let Beatrice bring Susan Rooney to dinner. Why not? They are undeniably good children in their way; truthful, good-humored, amusing. But certain unmistakable traits, certain little defects of manner, certain tendencies toward lower standards of thought and principle, set them apart from us. The gulf may be bridged by the development on their part of remarkable talents and energy, at some future time,—such opportunities our country affords—but at present our good sense bids us desire for our children companions whose social status is similar to their own; whose education and training swing along parallel lines. It is necessary that those canons of society which exact deportment, refinement of manner, pleasing appearance, be obeyed by ourselves, even if

we do not wish them recognized by our children. And notwithstanding all our superior, highly democratic talk, *we enforce them.* It seems to me that we should have the honesty to talk and act alike. Either make our theories fit our practice or our practice suit our theories; and acknowledge both frankly to our children.

The difference between theory and practice leads to misunderstandings between the elders and juniors in our families. The children are at first honestly all for equality. They take us at our word. Bit by bit, shame-facedly, we are compelled to acknowledge the hollowness of our axioms; little by little permit them to see into the unalterable laws that govern human intercourse, and understand that while worth is worth and "a man's a man for a' that" yet practically, we may not dine with the gardener nor invite the Italian fruitman's pretty little girls to our parties.

Well? Then the children begin to learn something about class distinctions. We may keep the facts concealed, but they come to the front at length because they are facts, like the rotation of the earth. I submit the question whether all the preliminary

humbugging was worth while; whether we might not better do as they do in the Old World and candidly admit the existence of social degrees and prepare the children from the first to take their proper place in society. With the one distinct advantage peculiar to Republican governments, that while we are born to certain spheres and only evil-doing degrades us, great talents or merit may raise us to the highest position.

There are two points in favor of the European system of training. It is rational, insomuch as it does not try to do what cannot really be done, and break down in the attempt; and it conduces to an excellent end — self-restraint and self-control. It must be confessed that in this respect we are weak. With us the individual is over-prominent. Our children are not taught that right and beautiful conduct consists in constantly recognizing and deferring to the rights of others. They hear little of the claims of society, much of their own privileges and liberties. By nature and example they are energetic and aggressive and they carry the impulsiveness of childhood into the acts of mature life. So they form ties of the most sacred nature without at all comprehend-

ing that the destinies of other individuals are bound up with their own, and that it is not possible to separate one's personal interest from that of others.

Our young people seem to the better poised and more self-restrained Europeans young heathen. Fascinating because innocent and frank in their monopoly of attention; but for all that, of the nature of savages who know no law but their will, no negations save the limit of opportunity. It must seem to thoughtful people that it may be expedient to change all this. If the claims of society are real, permanent and governed by fixed laws, why should not an understanding of them become a feature of home training in every household? Without false shame, we may tell our children, as English parents unhesitatingly do, that one of their prime duties is to learn to get on well with the world; that one should preserve his own self-respect, yet give deference where it is due. We may develop in them those faculties that give strength to character and still diligently cultivate at the same time those minor graces which are the passports to good society.

Emerson, our saint and prophet, the simplest of men as he was one of the wisest, bore witness to the

importance of manner and tone. "Manners," he said, in one of those wonderful passages that remain to us as beacons in the dark places of worldly disillusionment, "are the happy way of doing things; each, once a stroke of genius or of love, now hardened into usage. They form at last a rich varnish with which the routine of life is washed and its details adorned. If they are superficial, so are the dew drops which give such a depth to the morning meadows. . . . The power of manners is incessant — an element as unconcealable as fire. The nobility cannot in any country be disguised, and no more in a republic or a democracy than in a kingdom. No man can resist their influence. There are certain manners which are learned in good society, of that force that if a person have them, he or she must be considered, and is welcome everywhere, though without beauty, or wealth, or genius. Give a boy address and accomplishments, and you give him the mastery of palaces and fortunes wherever he goes. He has not the trouble of earning or winning them, they solicit him to enter and possess."

However wise or talented a person may be we do not care to have much to do with him unless he is

agreeable. Diogenes did not have to refuse many invitations. Many very great men are admired at a distance and their absence from scenes of pleasure sustained with cheerfulness. Doubtless there are times when they long to come down from their heights and mingle with their fellows but they have never learned the art of pleasing and they suffer the natural result. Very few persons can be happy isolated thus from their fellows. Superiority is meager satisfaction for the heart. For one person who can afford to isolate himself and live wholly on his own mental resources there are thousands who feel the need of sympathy and affection which is constantly passing round among people who are even casually thrown together. There are comparatively few times in our lives when we crave or can respond to intense love. If it was constantly proffered us it would exhaust the heart. The sweet, homely courtesies of everyday life, a smile that is given without a thought, a pleasant phrase that is uttered merely through the habit of politeness, are as a wholesome, refreshing current that flows gently through society, free to all who can pay the little price that entitles to its advantages.

Every one is naturally in society, whether he

chooses or not. He is born into it. During a lifetime a person may pass from one clique to another, like a rolling marble; there are so many cliques that he must find his requirements met at last. But whether he has little or much to do with others he cannot escape some contact with them. And it is essential for his satisfaction and for his worldly success that he should know how to make a good impression. I would tell a child even this much: that it is *policy* to learn the accomplishments that are expected from him in the place he is by birth entitled to occupy. Certain things are due to society from him. If he chooses to go beyond them it is well. He will naturally rise to the level of his talent. But the little amenities of life he must know; how to bear himself, how to dress,— whether richly or plainly, at least, with good taste; how to converse and above all, how to restrain his impulses and act with dignity and self-possession.

This ease, accompanied by modesty, is the most attractive demeanor a young person can practise. For the world always regards with considerable interest the person who mingles with it gracefully and still gives an impression of reserved force.

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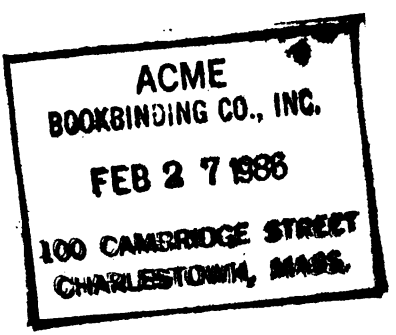
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